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ABSTRACT

Based on the view that ensuring the rights and well-being of children is the key to sustained development in a country and to peace and security in the world, this report calls for leadership from governments and all sectors of society, illustrates varied ways that people have shown their commitment to children's welfare, and emphasizes the need to give children the best possible start in life and to involve them in decisions affecting their future. Section 1 of the report highlights the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children and presents information on progress toward those goals. Section 2 describes the work of UNICEF during the 1980s, focusing on child health and the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also discussed is children's participation, discrimination against children, and the global movement for children. Section 3 asserts that investing in children is the best investment a government can make and discusses the importance of strategic leadership in the areas of early childhood development, basic education, and adolescence as well as responsibilities that go beyond national borders. The work of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001 is discussed. Throughout the report are panels describing programs in various countries. Completing the report are maps depicting findings from an assessment of the implementation of the 1990 World Summit for Children goals; balance sheets summarizing the goals, gains, and unfinished business of the 1990-2000 decade; and excerpts from regional meetings held in preparation for the Special Session on Children. (Contains 64 references.) (KB)

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# The State of the World's Children 2002

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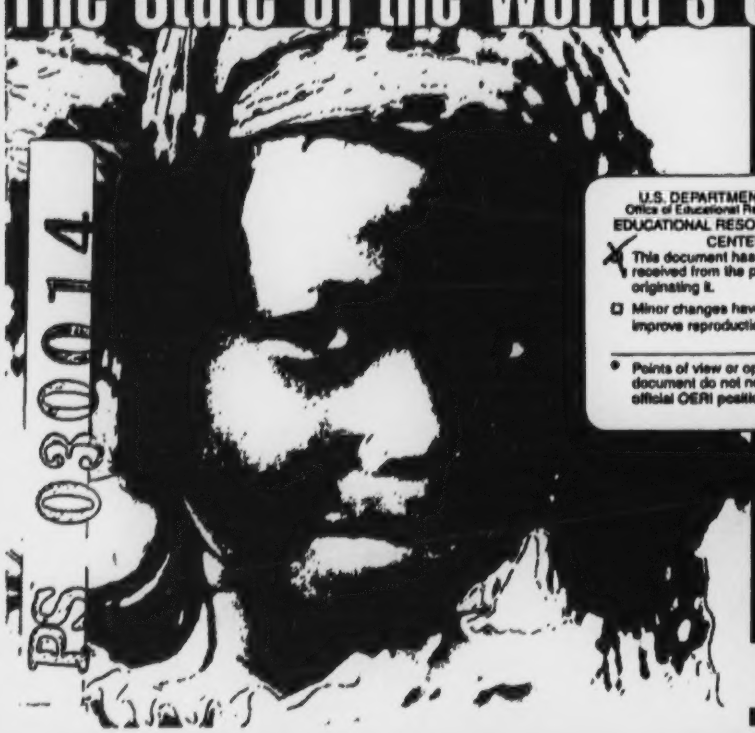

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# THE STATE OF
# THE WORLD'S
# CHILDREN
# 2002

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THE STATE OF

# THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2002

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director,
United Nations Children's Fund

unicef
United Nations Children's Fund

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## The State of the World's Children 2002: Leadership

By Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund

Governments, as well as international institutions, must be held accountable for their leadership in putting the rights and well-being of children above all other concerns. And those that fail to do so must also be held accountable.

Ensuring the rights and well-being of children is the key to sustained development in a country and to peace and security in the world. Meeting this responsibility, fully, consistently and at any cost, is the essence of leadership. Heads of State and Government hold the lion's share of this responsibility but commitment and action are also called for across the board: from community activists and entrepreneurs, from artists and scientists, from religious leaders and journalists – and from children and adolescents themselves.

**I. *Birth and broken promises:*** There was high excitement in the village, the kind of joy and optimism that only a new baby can bring. Ayodele was a beautiful baby, full of limitless potential, her whole life before her. For this moment, as should be the case at the birth of any child, everyone set aside their fears and doubts about the future, their anxieties about family health and growing enough food. They congratulated the baby's parents and contemplated the resurgent hope that new life always brings. ......*9*

At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, there was a birth of a different kind, one to which great hope was also attached. An unprecedented number of country presidents and national leaders gathered in New York for the World Summit for Children. It was September 1990, a time of unusual optimism in the world.

**II. *"To change the world with children:"*** Since the earliest days of its existence, UNICEF has called the world's attention to the situation of children – to the many of them bruised by the operation of national societies and the global economy, to the ways in which they have suffered because of their parents' poverty, to how their health has suffered through lack of food or immunization and their mental development through poor health, abuse and neglect and lack of education – and has taken action to offset the damage. ....*33*

**III. *Actions that can change the world:*** Unquestionably, countries with the most power in the global economy need to show leadership in the pursuit of child rights. But developing countries' disadvantage does not exempt their governments from the need to demonstrate leadership on behalf of children. The rights of children are indivisible and paramount. No society should be satisfied until the rights of all are guaranteed and respected. ....*51*

Investing in children is, quite simply, the best investment a government can make. No country has made the leap into meaningful and sustained development without investing significantly in its children.

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# Foreword

Like millions of people around the world, I have signed on to the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, which proclaims that "all children should be free to grow in health, peace and dignity." Can there be a more sacred duty than our obligation to protect the rights of a child as vigilantly as we protect the rights of any other person? Can there be a greater test of leadership than the task of ensuring these freedoms for every child, in every country, without exception?

At the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on Children this September, the international community will take up this challenge as it reviews the progress that has been made since the 1990 World Summit for Children. Ten years have yielded mixed results. Three million fewer children under five now die each year, due in large part to immunization programmes and the dedicated efforts of families and communities. In developing countries, 28 million fewer children under five suffer the debilitating effects of malnutrition. More than 175 countries are polio-free, and 104 have eliminated neonatal tetanus. Yet despite these gains, more than 10 million children still die from mostly preventable diseases, some 600 million children still live in poverty, and more than 100 million – the majority of them girls – are not in school.

Of all the lessons learned in the past decade, the critical role of leadership is perhaps the most important one to take with us into the new century. Leadership is an imperative if we are to improve the lives of children, their families and their communities. We must put the best interests of children at the heart of all political and business decision-making, and at the centre of our day-to-day behaviour and activities.

This issue of UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children* is thus most timely. It calls for leadership from all continents and all sectors of society. It illustrates the many and varied ways that people have shown their commitment to children's welfare. And it emphasizes the need to give children the best possible start in life, to ensure that every child completes a basic education, and to involve children – adolescents in particular – in the decisions that affect their lives.

These are no doubt ambitious goals, especially given the persistence of poverty, inequality and conflict, and the ravages of HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases. No single government or organization can hope to achieve them on its own. But together we can build a world fit for children, if each of us does our part and takes the well-being of children as our own responsibility. The Special Session must galvanize our collective efforts. This report is intended as a contribution to that essential work and merits the widest possible readership.

Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations

# Leadership

*Children's elections in Mexico*

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# I

# Birth and broken promises

There was high excitement in the village, the kind of joy and optimism that only a new baby can bring. Ayodele was a beautiful baby, full of limitless potential, her whole life before her. For this moment, as should be the case at the birth of any child, everyone set aside their fears and doubts about the future, their anxieties about family health and growing enough food. They congratulated the baby's parents and contemplated the resurgent hope that new life always brings.[1]

At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, there was a birth of a different kind, one to which great hope was also attached. An unprecedented number of country presidents and national leaders gathered in New York for the World Summit for Children. It was September 1990, a time of unusual optimism in the world.

*Schoolchildren in Zimbabwe*

World Summit for Children

# Goal 1

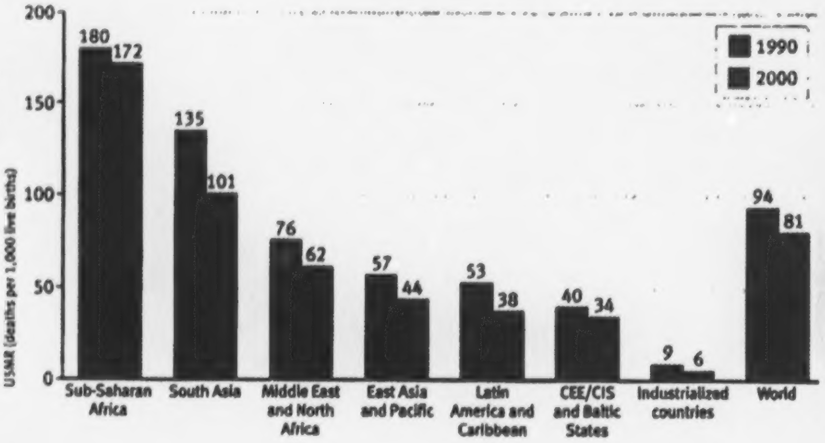
## For children and development in the 1990s

Saiba como se pega AIDS.
Assim pega.
Assim não pega.
Seja vivo. Evite a AIDS.

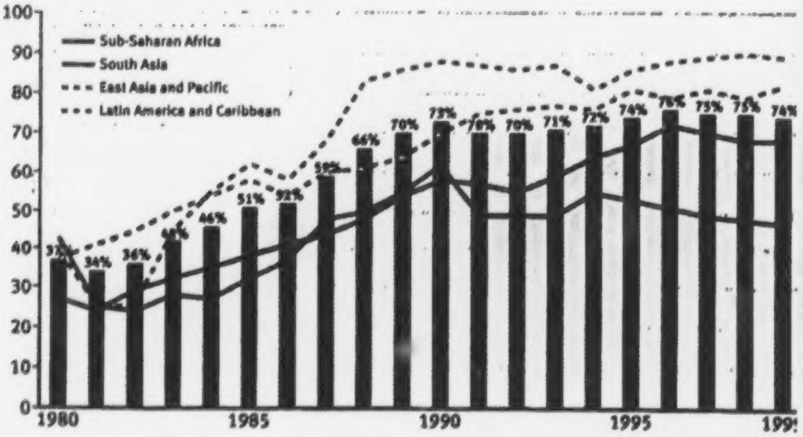
## *Reduce infant and under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) by 33%*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | 14% reduction with 3 million fewer child deaths |
| 1990 U5MR | 94 per 1,000 live births |
| 2000 U5MR | 81 per 1,000 live births |
| 2010 goal | Further 33% reduction |
| Comments | 63 countries achieved the goal of a 33% reduction and in over 100 countries deaths in children under 5 were cut by 20%. |

**U5MR change over period 1990-2000**



**Immunization 1980-1999, DPT3 coverage**



**Sources:** United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, June 2001.

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The child-health revolution, begun decades earlier, was in full swing during the 1980s as a worldwide immunization drive saved millions of young lives. The cold war was over and there was widespread expectation that money that had been spent on arms could now be devoted to human development in a 'peace dividend'. The World Summit for Children seemed in itself a sign that the world had moved into a new and brighter phase in which its policy makers and politicians could gather to consider how to guarantee children a better life rather than to deal with the implications of superpower rivalry.

The World Summit reflected the world's hopes for children. Leaders promised to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been unanimously approved by the United Nations General Assembly just the year before. They signed on to ambitious goals to reduce child mortality, increase immunization coverage, deliver basic education and a whole raft of other measures by the year 2000. There was hope that the combination of a specific legal framework together with an action plan with time-tied, concrete goals would transform children's lives worldwide over the decade to come. Children's survival, development, protection and education were no longer matters of charitable concern but of legal obligation. The Declaration to which the world's leaders signed their name was bold and unequivocal: "The well-being of children requires political action at the highest level." The cause of children, for perhaps the first time in human history, was at the top of the world's agenda.

## Eleven years on

Ayodele is now 10 years old, going on 11 – and, though she does not know it, she has been let down. Her life is much the same as it would have been for a girl of her age in 1990. She is hard at work. The grain needs to be pounded for the nightly meal. This job is far from being her first of the day: She has already collected four large bowls full of water, which she has carried back to her family's compound on her head; she has helped in the fields, cleaned the house and has looked after her younger brothers and sisters. Yes, she would like to go to school, but it is very expensive to buy the books and, besides, her family needs her at home.

Ayodele's life provides one small piece in the jigsaw of evidence that shows that the most optimistic assessments both in her own village and in New York at the time of her birth have not been realized. While she survived her first five years of life, two of her siblings born since the World Summit did not, dying from childhood diseases against which they could have been immunized or which were easily treated. Ayodele's learning potential was far from realized. Schools are not the only place in which learning occurs, and she has grasped, by precept and example, many of the important skills she will need to negotiate life in the village and beyond. But she cannot read or deal with any but the most basic ideas of number; she has no knowledge of the world beyond her local town; and she has no idea of her own rights.

## Children of the 1990s

One child cannot stand for the whole world, but the picture for the human family in its entirety, while it has some bright spots that were a lot darker back in 1990, reflects a largely unfulfilled promise to children like Ayodele. The group of children born at the start of the last decade of the 20th century was the largest generation of children the world has ever known. If all those born at the time of the World Summit were reduced proportionately to a cohort of 100 children, what would they look like? – and what would their experience in the last 10 years have been?

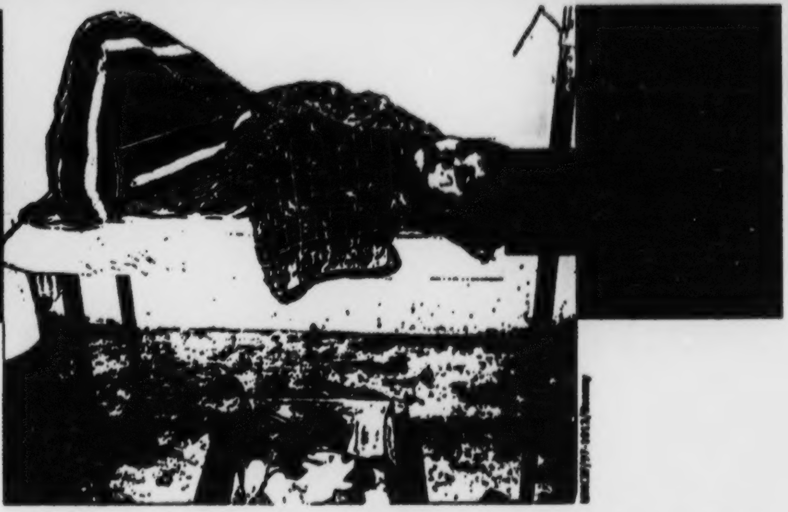
### *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Carlos Arévalo, a Peruvian national police colonel, founded COLIBRI, an NGO that works with abandoned children and adolescents living on the streets, helping them continue their education.**

World Summit
for Children

# Goal
2

## For children and development in the 1990s



## *Reduce maternal mortality ratio by 50%*

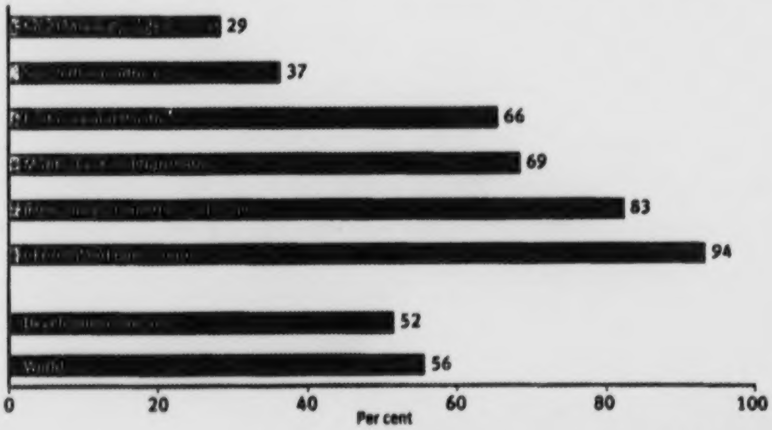
| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | No change – 515,000 women die every year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth |
| 1990 | NA |
| 2000 | 400 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births |
| 2010 goal | 33% reduction |
| Comments | There has been a small increase in the percentage of births that are attended by skilled personnel in some 53 countries where maternal mortality is generally less severe. But, other than this limited change in a single proxy measure, no other changes in global maternal mortality ratios have been shown. |

### Risking death to give life

| Region | Lifetime chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth* |
|---|---|
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 1 in 13 |
| South Asia | 1 in 54 |
| Middle East/North Africa | 1 in 55 |
| Latin America/Caribbean | 1 in 157 |
| East Asia/Pacific | 1 in 283 |
| CEE/CIS and Baltic States | 1 in 797 |
| Least developed countries | 1 in 16 |
| Developing countries | 1 in 61 |
| Industrialized countries | 1 in 4,085 |
| World | 1 in 75 |

* Affected not only by maternal mortality rates but also by the number of births per woman.

### Skilled attendants at delivery, 1995-2000



**Sources:** United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, June 2001.

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Of the 100 children, 55 would have been born in Asia, including 19 in India and 18 in China. Eight would have come from Latin America and the Caribbean, seven from the Middle East and North Africa, 16 from sub-Saharan Africa, six from CEE/CIS and Baltic States and eight from industrialized countries.

The births of 33 of these children went unregistered: As a result they have no official existence, no recognition of nationality. Some of them have no access to health facilities or to school without this official proof of their age and identity.

Around 32 of the children suffered from malnutrition before the age of five and 27 were not immunized against any diseases. Nine died before the age of five. Of the remaining 91 children, 18 do not attend school, of whom 11 are girls. Eighteen of the children have no access to safe drinking water and 39 live without sanitation.

The difference between the life experiences and living conditions of these 100 children and a comparable cohort of 11-year-olds in 1990 is not anything as great as the international community would have wished when it began its undertakings a decade ago. Eleven years on from the World Summit, world leaders are again to gather in New York to consider the state of the world's children, looking back over the years since the fine words of the Declaration were expressed and since key, specific goals were set to improve children's lives. The data presented to them will show that the progress has been patchy, the record a mixture of conspicuous achievement and dispiriting failure.

## Meeting the goals – and falling short

The first goal of the World Summit was to reduce the rates of infant and under-five mortality by one third between 1990 and 2000. Overall the reduction was 14 per cent – a significant improvement, which means that 3 million more children a year are now surviving beyond their fifth birthday than was the case a decade ago. More than 60 countries actually achieved the one-third reduction, including most countries in the European Union and North Africa and many others in East Asia, Oceania, the Americas and the Middle East *(see Goal 1)*.

But, the global picture conceals a massive disparity in achievements between regions and nations. Some rich countries did not achieve the goal while some very poor countries managed, by dint of huge effort and effective policies, to reach it. The tragedy of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa in particular not only sent some countries' child-mortality rates soaring after decades of improvement but also acted as a drag upon the global figure.

In the case of one of the major causes of child mortality, diarrhoea, the world actually achieved its goal of slashing death rates in half. The goal set in relation to measles was even more ambitious: a 95 per cent reduction in the number of deaths from measles and a 90 per cent reduction in measles cases by 1995. Over the whole decade, measles cases have declined by nearly two thirds, still a remarkable achievement. The target for neonatal tetanus was also appropriately bold: to eliminate it completely by 1995. At the latest count, 104 of 161 developing countries have achieved that goal – and 90 per cent of all remaining neonatal tetanus is in just 27 countries.

Polio was slated for complete eradication by 2000. Again, the progress has been extraordinary without the goal quite being reached. More than 175 countries have been certified polio-free, and the world now looks to be on target, provided the commitment remains there, to eradicate polio by 2005 at the latest. At that point it will become the second disease, after smallpox, to be completely

### *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Henita Asinsaun is only 15 years old, but she's already a veteran in organizing and activism: In her home town of Malaian Bobonaro, East Timor, she trains women in how to run meetings, organize a budget and set and achieve their goals.**

PANEL
1

# Immunization plus...

UNICEF/[illegible]

Cecilia Soriano, 42, lives with her husband and eight children in a shanty in Manila. Since she was pregnant with her daughter, Katherine, who is now five, Cecilia has been troubled by night-blindness. Initially, she thought her vision problems were a routine part of being pregnant. Then, after her baby was born, she thought she was just getting old. But when Katherine began coming home covered with scrapes, scratches and bumps on her forehead after playing outside at dusk and frequently complaining about her eyes, Cecilia became alarmed. She sought the help of Nenita Ito, a community health worker, who encouraged Cecilia to go to the public health centre. The doctor diagnosed both Cecilia and Katherine as having night-blindness due to vitamin A deficiency (VAD).

Affecting about 100 million young children worldwide, vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of blindness in children in developing countries. Even mild deficiencies can compromise a young child's immune system, reducing resistance to such child-killer diseases as measles, malaria and diarrhoea. Children with vitamin A deficiencies face a 25 per cent greater risk of dying from childhood illnesses than those with an adequate intake of this micronutrient or those whose diets are fortified or supplemented on a regular basis with vitamin A capsules.

In the early 1990s, the Government of the Philippines promoted vitamin A supplementation and full immunization of children through National Immunization Days and Micronutrient Days. As a result of vigorous campaigns, nearly 90 per cent of Filipino children aged six or younger were covered from 1993 to 1996. In 1998, these campaigns were integrated into a more comprehensive programme, which twice yearly provided children aged six and younger with vitamin A supplementation, routine immunization, deworming, iron supplementation, and iodized salt testing and distribution. Mothers and caregivers were educated about breastfeeding, hygiene and the advantages of using iodized salt.

Leticia Bancairen, a community health worker, remembers trekking to remote villages of the B'laans, one of five major indigenous groups in the Sarangani Islands, to urge mothers to take their children to the health centre. Eighty-five per cent of the target population received a second dose of vitamin A in 2000. But despite these campaigns against VAD, it still remains a major threat to the lives of Filipino children, in particular to those who are the most impoverished.

Reducing vitamin A deficiency by having at least two rounds of vitamin A supplementation per year with at least 70 per cent coverage among children aged 6 to 59 months was one of the goals set at the 1990 World Summit for Children. Progress has been made over the past 10 years – the number of developing countries providing vitamin A supplementation to 70 per cent or more of children under five has risen from 11 nations in 1996, to 27 in 1998, and 43 in 1999. As many as 1 million young lives may have been saved in the last three years alone through vitamin A supplementation.

But, despite the success of vitamin A campaigns to date, new distribution systems must be established – or existing primary health care systems must be strengthened – if the world is to meet its challenge of reducing infant and under-five mortality rates by two thirds by 2015. For this to happen, every child must receive, at a minimum, regular immunizations and vitamin A supplementation.

Children in the poorest countries are the least protected by vaccines and regular immunizations from dying before they are five years old, and the gap is growing between these children and those in the industrialized world who have such life-savers readily available.

Committed to closing this gap, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) was formed in 1999 with the goal of reaching the 30 million to 40 million children in developing countries who are not immunized. The GAVI partners – which include national governments, UNICEF, the World Bank Group, the World Health Organization, the Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Program, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations and public health and research institutions – hope to significantly expand the reach and effectiveness of immunization programmes country by country.

GAVI also aims to make underused vaccines, such as that for yellow fever and new vaccines such as hepatitis B and *Haemophilus influenza* type b (Hib), available to all children at risk by 2002 and 2005, respectively. Through a global network of international development organizations, multilateral development banks, philanthropic organizations, private sector leaders and other parties, GAVI promises to further energize the world's commitment to its youngest citizens.

conquered through human will and solidarity. Meanwhile, the number of reported cases of guinea worm disease declined over the decade by 97 per cent. Only 13 countries in Africa and one country in the Middle East are now affected.

The child-health achievements are mixed with concern that what in 1990 seemed like unstoppable progress towards universal child immunization has stalled somewhat in the decade since. It is now clear that the levels of immunization at the time of the World Summit were actually lower, at 73 per cent, than was assumed at the time. Not only has the Summit goal of 90 per cent coverage not been achieved, but the world has struggled to maintain about the same levels of coverage: Over a quarter of the world's children (around 30 million infants) are still not reached by routine immunization. In sub-Saharan Africa only 47 per cent of children are immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus.

In the field of nutrition, the primary goal was to cut malnutrition rates among children under five by half. Although this was more than achieved in South America, the decline in developing countries was only 17 per cent. In Asia, where more than two thirds of the world's malnourished children live, the drop in child malnutrition rates was relatively small, from 36 per cent to 29 per cent, while in sub-Saharan Africa the absolute number of malnourished children has actually increased *(see Goal 3)*.

On the other hand, two of the micronutrients identified at the World Summit for Children as key to preventing 'hidden hunger' – vitamin A and iodine – have been success stories of the 1990s. The lack of vitamin A can lead to blindness and make children more susceptible to illness, but can be prevented by fortification of food or the distribution of capsules as part of immunization campaigns. Between 1996 and 1999 the number of countries with 70 per cent or higher coverage in vitamin A rose from 11 to 43 *(see Panel 1)*.

Iodine deficiency, meanwhile, which is the main cause of preventable mental retardation, is most easily addressed through the simple process of iodizing salt. The goal of virtually eliminating iodine deficiency disorders has not been met, but the percentage of people in developing countries consuming iodized salt has gone up from under 20 per cent to around 72 per cent. Given this progress, the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders by 2005 looks to be a realistic prospect, though it will require both effort and commitment, since there are still 37 countries where less than half of the households consume iodized salt.

The World Summit goals of universal access to safe drinking water and sanitary means of excreta disposal by 2000 have not even been neared during the 1990s. The percentage of people with access has gone up in both cases – from 79 per cent to 82 per cent for water, and 55 per cent to 60 per cent for sanitation. But this still leaves around 1.1 billion people without safe water and 2.4 billion people without adequate sanitation, the vast majority of the latter group being in Asia *(see Goals 4 & 5)*.

The goal of universal access to basic education is also still far from being achieved. Net primary enrolment ratios increased in every region but there are still more than 100 million children out of school and many more than that who receive an education of poor quality. The gender gap – the difference between the school enrolment and completion rates of boys and girls – is still far too wide, even if it has closed fractionally overall and narrowed significantly in most countries in the Middle East and North Africa. There was a modest decline in adult illiteracy which fell well short of the 50 per cent cut that had been hoped for *(see Goal 6)*.

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Caroline Awuor Agwanda is a Kenyan who hasn't let a disability stop her from being an entrepreneurial leader: At only 24, she is an established businesswoman who employs 20 artisans in her shop, HOPE, and supports her 11-member family.**

World Summit for Children

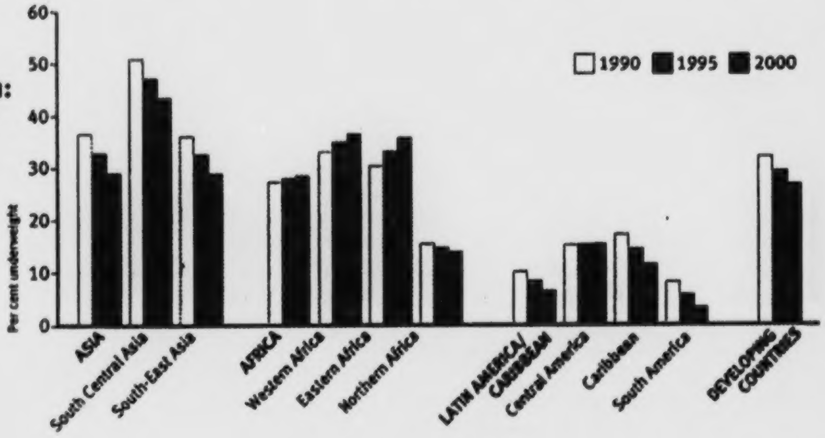
# Goal 3

## For children and development in the 1990s

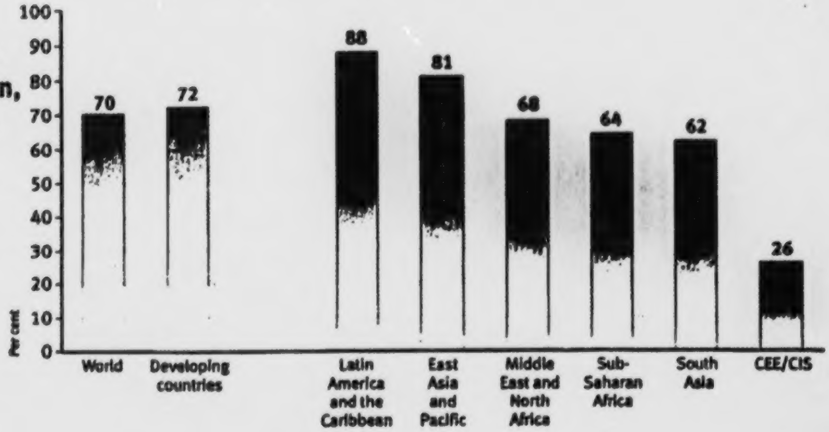
## *Reduce severe and moderate under-5 malnutrition by 50%*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | 17% reduction in developing countries |
| 1990 | 32% in developing countries |
| 2000 | 27% in developing countries |
| 2010 goal | 33% reduction, with special attention to children under two |
| Comments | The total number of malnourished children in developing countries fell from 177 million to 149 million. |

**Trends in child malnutrition: developing countries, 1990-2000**



**Levels of iodized salt consumption, 1995-2000**



**Sources:** United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3 , United Nations, New York, June 2001.

## Falling far short

It is in the area of women's health, however, where countries have made no discernable progress – a reflection of women's continuing low status in many societies. The aim was to reduce maternal mortality rates by half but there is no evidence that there has been any significant decline. A related goal of giving all pregnant women access to prenatal care and trained attendants during childbirth has been hardly met: only 29 per cent of births in South Asia are attended and only 37 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa *(see Goal 2)*.

UNICEF is determined to focus attention on the unfinished business, on the children who, like Ayodele, have not yet been reached. The world should be under no illusion: Despite the progress that has been made, the last decade has been a missed opportunity of tragic proportions.

## Human pain, human ingenuity

When leaders are talking of millions of people, the individuals involved are too easily reduced to ciphers, their pain translated into statistics and trends. But every one of the children born since 1990 has a name and a story; every one of them has the right to health, learning and protection, the right to their full potential and the right to participate in shaping their world – rights which have in all too many cases been violated.

Why have children's rights continued to be abused? Are child poverty and ill-health monsters that will always be with us, unbanishable, unbeatable? Must the exploitation of children be a fact of life forever?

Think again. In that same decade humanity showed its enormous ingenuity and technological capacity over and again. The understanding of humans' genetic make-up increased with every passing year and could within a generation make even the most intractable diseases, from cancer to cystic fibrosis, less terrifying and life-threatening than they have been to all previous generations. A mammal, Dolly the sheep, was cloned for the first time ever – and later gave birth to normal, healthy lambs. In the 1990s, the Internet went from being the plaything of a privileged few to a mass medium that promised to change our whole way of perceiving the world: By the year 2000, over 300 million people were estimated to be using the Internet, making this by far the fastest-growing communication tool ever.[2] The $2 billion Hubble Space Telescope, the most complex and sensitive space observatory ever constructed, was launched into orbit in 1990; a US spacecraft docked with the Russian space station Mir in 1995 in an historic advance both in terms of technology and of international cooperation; and in 1998, a Russian rocket took into orbit the first component of the new International Space Station, which is the most expensive single object ever built.[3] By the end of the decade, no less than $1.5 trillion was changing hands each day in speculation on the international currency markets.[4]

Presented with these extraordinary developments, is there anyone who could seriously maintain that the world leaders' declaration of intent for children in 1990 represented an impossible dream? The resources and technological know-how are there. That this wealth and these skills have not been fully harnessed to deliver a world fit for children is, then, a result of misguided leadership and a dereliction of duty.

## Leadership

Governments, as well as international institutions, must be held accountable for their leadership in putting the rights and well-being of children above all other concerns. And those that fail to do so must also be held accountable.

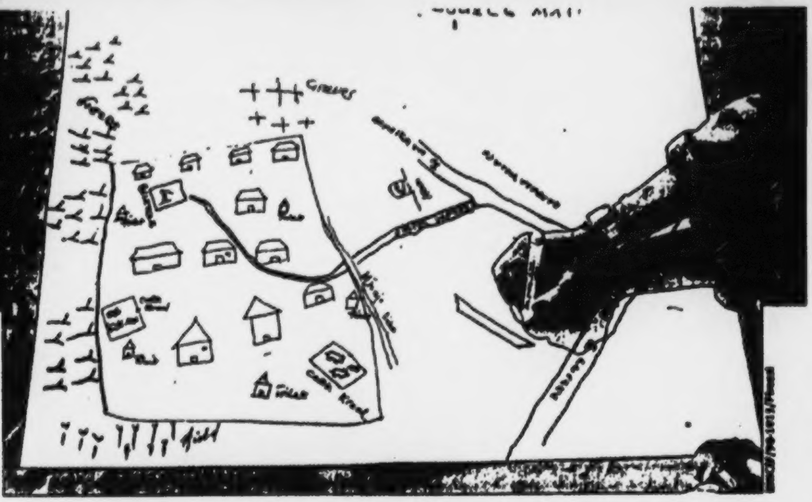
### *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Brazilian journalist Ambar de Barros founded ANDI, an acronym in Portuguese for the *News Agency on Children's Rights*, a news organization for mobilizing and training journalists to promote social equity, and investigation and debate of the problems of street children and youth.**

World Summit for Children

# Goals 4 & 5

## For children and development in the 1990s



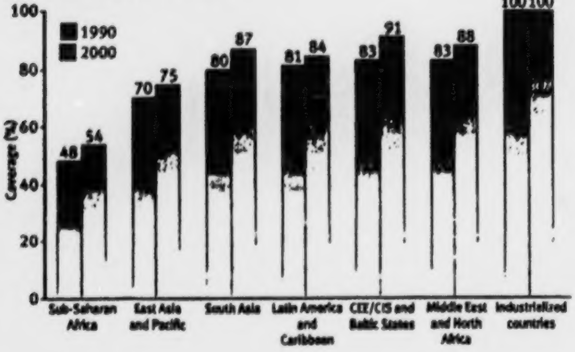
### *Universal access to safe drinking water*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | 3 percentage point increase with 816 million additional people now having access |
| 1990 | 79% (4.1 billion) |
| 2000 | 82% (5 billion) |
| 2010 goal | 33% increase |
| Comments | 1.1 billion people still lack access. |

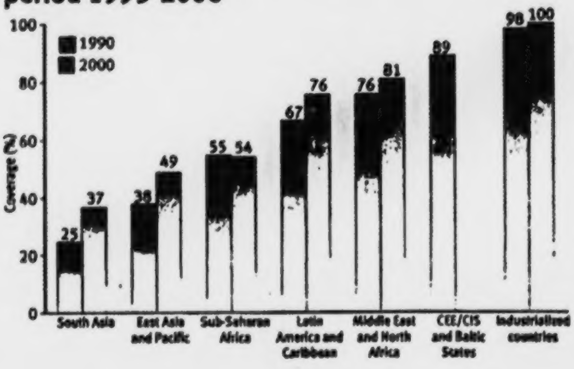
### *Universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | 5 percentage point increase with 747 million additional people now having access |
| 1990 | 55% (2.9 billion) |
| 2000 | 60% (3.6 billion) |
| 2010 goal | 33% increase |
| Comments | 2.4 billion people still lack access, including half of all people living in Asia. |

**Improved water coverage, change over period 1995-2000**



**Improved sanitation coverage, change over period 1995-2000**



Sources: United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, June 2001.

Ensuring the rights and well-being of children is the key to sustained development in a country and to peace and security in the world. Meeting this responsibility, fully, consistently and at any cost, is the essence of leadership. Heads of State and Government hold the lion's share of this responsibility but commitment and action are also called for across the board: from community activists and entrepreneurs, from artists and scientists, from religious leaders and journalists – and from children and adolescents themselves.

The United Nations Secretary-General, in his report at the time of the Millennium Summit, stated: "No shift in the way we think or act can be more critical than this: we must put people at the centre of everything we do. No calling is more noble, and no responsibility greater, than that of enabling men, women and children, in cities and villages around the world, to make their lives better."[5]

Each of us has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership as we go about the everyday business of our lives by taking the extra moment to ask: 'How does this decision, this choice, affect the lives of children'?

It was leadership that the late Julius Nyerere exercised when he built the nation of Tanzania on what he described as the "values of justice, a respect for human beings, a development which is people centred, development where you care about people...".[6] When Nyerere first became Prime Minister of the newly independent nation in 1961, 85 per cent of the adult population was illiterate and there were two trained engineers and 12 doctors. When he retired as President in 1985, there was a 91 per cent literacy rate, thousands of engineers, doctors and teachers had been trained and nearly every child in the United Republic of Tanzania was in school.[7]

Today, H. E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives, is among those contemporary Heads of State who use their positions of leadership to invest generously in the social sector, particularly in programmes benefiting children. In the Maldives, the investment in the country's youngest citizens has resulted in some of the best social indicators in the region such as low infant mortality rates and good basic education and literacy rates for this nation of islands.

Ordinary people are just as capable of showing leadership as are prime ministers and presidents. Head teachers show leadership, for example, when they admit children into school despite their families not being able to pay the required fees – recognizing the higher costs to the child, the family and the community of keeping the child out. Parents show leadership, when in communities where it is normal only to send sons, they send their daughters to school – and when they resist social pressure to withdraw the girls for early marriage.

Nine sheikhs from Somalia showed leadership in 2000 when they travelled to attend a course at Al-Azhar International University Centre for Islamic Studies in Cairo, on the harm that female genital mutilation (FGM) inflicts on girls and women in various cultures throughout the world. As did Dr. Ahmed R.A. Ragab, an Islamic scholar and gynaecologist, who visited every area of the country to conduct targeted sessions in communities about the disastrous medical implications of FGM. As a result, not only has the Awdal region in the north-west of Somalia declared the total eradication of FGM to be a priority goal but religious leaders and most civilian authorities have also rallied around the cause of eliminating FGM – a significant breakthrough in a country where over 95 per cent of girls have hitherto been mutilated in this way[8] *(see Panel 2).*

In Namibia, leadership is being shown in the My Future is My Choice programme by secondary-school graduates who receive 10 days of training,

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**With five of her friends and $720 in funding from Netaid.org Foundation, 15-year-old Kuheli Battacharya has been an inspiration to teens and adults alike by running a vaccination clinic for poor children in her community of Pune, India. "If we don't care," she asks, "who will?"**

PANEL

2

# Tostan: A breakthrough movement

Ourèye Sall used to earn her living performing female genital cutting in Senegal. Not even when one of her daughters nearly haemorrhaged to death three decades ago, after being cut by her grandmother, could Ourèye stop. Culture and tradition were too strong. Plus it was her only source of income. But in 1997, together with others in her village, Ourèye put down her knives.

Female genital cutting, the removal of part or all of the female genitalia, has existed for thousands of years. Yet during the past four years, 282 villages in Senegal, representing approximately 220,000 people, have stopped the practice. The villages did not stop female genital cutting in response to outside pressure or national laws. Instead, it was a grass-roots movement arising from the people that put an end to the practice. Ourèye Sall is a leader in that movement.

She holds her head up high as she speaks to villagers, religious leaders, government officials, journalists and the international community about her decision to stop cutting and her role in helping to end the practice throughout Senegal.

This movement to end female genital cutting began in the village of Malicounda Bambara. Villagers decided to abolish the tradition after participating in a UNICEF-funded basic education programme run by the NGO, 'Tostan' ("breakthrough" in Wolof, a local tongue). Unlike literacy programmes of the 1970s and 1980s, which involved teacher-led discussions and letter and syllable repetition, Tostan depends on a participatory process where learners sit in a circle and use role-playing, singing, proverbs, poetry and theatre.

In 1997, two years after Tostan first began, women of Malicounda Bambara, with the support of their husbands and religious leaders, ended female genital cutting in their community. Citing human rights articles and negative health consequences for their daughters, the women had begun a movement of cultural change. A shorter version of that original programme is now in place in over 400 villages in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Sudan, with similar results.

Without a doubt, the practical, student-focused classes are what led to the groundswell of social activism. The straightforward programme focuses on technical information. Beginning with human rights education and collective problem-solving, the core of all other modules, the class learns about hygiene, oral rehydration, immunization, financial and material management, leadership, group dynamics, women's health and income-generating options. Each module incorporates village customs, language and traditions to create a respectful environment that matches the participants' learning styles. Social mobilization activities assure the learning process is participatory and relevant to the community.

As they move through the programme, learners become more at ease with discussing once taboo issues. The Tostan programme gives facts, not judgements. It's up to the participants to decide what to do with the new information they've received. "If you impose on me, I'll fight," says Demba Diawara, the Imam from Keur Simbara who walks from village to village in his campaign to end female genital cutting. "But if I am allowed the dignity and space to decide, I will fully cooperate."

One activity begun in the classroom and carried to neighbouring villages is a play. The class members act out the story of Poolel, an eight-year-old girl who is to undergo the ancient rite of circumcision. Like other girls her age, she is to become a 'real woman' who will be clean, respectable and marriage-ready.

As the play evolves, Poolel goes through this rite of passage but bleeds profusely. Fearful that the young girl will die, the family takes her to the health clinic nurse. The nurse arranges for Poolel to go to the regional hospital where she dies the next day.

After discussing the play and their feelings and answering questions about female genital cutting, many classes have concluded that the ancient practice must stop. Bolstered by their new understanding of the rights of women and children, the participants are galvanized to protect their daughters, granddaughters, nieces and other village girls.

"African women are such incredible mothers and do so much for their children," says Molly Melching, the director of Tostan. "To say they are mutilators is offensive. Female genital cutting was an act of love to protect their daughters' honour. Ending the practice to protect their daughters' human rights and health is now their act of love."

In Senegal, the real impetus for abandoning female genital cutting is at the grassroots, where women, men and religious and traditional leaders are engaged in a dynamic collaboration.

Since the movement has taken hold, the Senegal Parliament has passed a national law abolishing the ritual. While laws may be supportive of the people's actions, the real power lies in village declarations. These public decrees tip the balance. Where once women like Ourèye Sall could not stop cutting for fear their daughters would not be able to find husbands, now it is just the opposite.

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enabling them to facilitate a life skills training course including up to 22 adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age. Between 1997 and the middle of 2000, the programme had reached 74,000 young people and should meet its target of training 80 per cent of 15- to 18-year-olds by the end of 2001.[9]

Costa Rica provides an excellent example of how leadership can transform the fortunes of a country – and particularly of its children. On 1 December 1948, President José Figueres abolished the army. "The army hands over the keys to the barracks, to be converted into a cultural centre," he said. "We are the sustainers of a new world in America. Little Costa Rica offers its heart and love to civilian rule and democracy."[10]

Figueres believed that democratic institutions would only grow strong in Costa Rica if the army was disbanded. He also saw the opportunity to promote the rights of children at the same time: He transferred the whole defence budget to the Education Ministry at a stroke.

More than 50 years later, Costa Rica is still seeing the benefits of this enlightened position. Leaders and governments have come and gone in the decades since Figueres left the scene but, whether from the left or the right, none of them has disturbed the legacy that has long given the country the best human-development indicators in the region. Right through the terrible decade of the 1980s in which death squads and torture corroded the neighbouring societies of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, and while a disastrous armed conflict was being fought in Nicaragua, Costa Rica maintained its steady, peaceful progress. In 1999, under-five mortality, often the most reliable index of human development because it measures an outcome rather than an input, stood at 14 per 1,000 in Costa Rica, compared with 60 in Guatemala, 47 in Nicaragua and 42 in El Salvador and Honduras. "We really did spend the money on schools and health," says economist Boris Segura. "Armies are a waste of money. It's that simple."[11]

Across the globe, where children in Afghanistan have suffered disproportionately from the country's decades of internal armed conflict, it is worth noting that there have also been impressive acts of leadership in the years 2000 and 2001. During 2000, four National Immunization Days were completed in Afghanistan, with an average of 5.4 million children reached with the polio vaccine in each case; five further immunization rounds are planned for 2001. In every case so far, the polio eradication activities have been conducted in conditions of tranquillity: Both the warring factions and all their local commanders have respected the peace, recognizing the overarching importance of the vaccination campaign.[12]

## Facing HIV

Conflict is one of the main blockages on the road to child rights; another is HIV/AIDS. On an international level, the industrialized countries have taken insufficient responsibility for the global battle of the human family against the virus. Each of the wealthiest nations took immediate and urgent action from the mid-1980s to counter the spread of the epidemic within their own populations, through activism, public-education campaigns and health initiatives. Yet once there were signs that the epidemic had been contained within their own countries, too many governments responded with complacency about what was happening around the world. Governments of industrialized countries paid narrow attention to their own disease statistics and turned a blind eye to the tragedy unfolding in developing countries. Only as the millennium loomed did they realize that in this arena national borders are insignificant and that we are likely to stand or fall together.

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Asserting that female genital cutting "mutilates the mind as well as the body," former European Union Commissioner Emma Bonino has launched a campaign to have FGC recognized as a fundamental abuse of human rights and to change Europe's asylum policy for women at risk who are seeking refugee status.**

World Summit for Children

# Goal 6

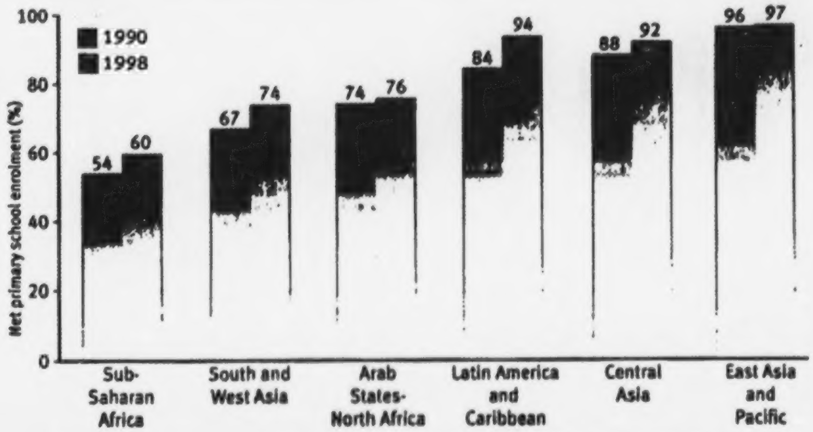
## For children and development in the 1990s

### *Universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by 80% of children*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | Increasing, with a narrowing gender gap. There are now more children in school than there ever were before |
| 1990 | 78% |
| 2000 | 82% |
| 2005 goal | Elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary educatio |
| 2010 goal | A further 50% reduction of children not in school and a net primary school enrolment of at least 90% |
| Comments | While net primary enrolment is increasing at a higher rate than population growth, there are still more than 100 million children without access to basic education, 60 million of them girls. These are overwhelmingly working children, children affected by disability, HIV/AIDS or conflict, children of poor families, children of ethnic minorities, children in rural, peri-urban and remote areas and, above all, girls. |

**Sources:** United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, June 2001.

**Primary school enrolment (net), change over period 1990-1998**



### *Reduce adult illiteracy rate to 50% of the 1990 level*

| | |
|---|---|
| Trend | 16% decrease, although the number hovers around 880 million due to population growth |
| 1990 | 25% (895 million illiterate adults) |
| 2000 | 21% (875 million illiterate adults) |
| Comments | Illiteracy has become concentrated regionally in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. It has also become concentrated among women. |

The UN Security Council debated AIDS for the first time in January 2000, recognizing that the disease presents a threat to international peace and security. Later that year UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot said: "No doubt, the year 2000 can be described as the year when the problem of AIDS was recognized also as a political problem.... It is sad but true: the main decision makers hardly showed any interest until it was brought home to them that productivity and economic growth were being seriously affected."[13]

The profound impact of the epidemic on the lives of children and their families threatens not only individual lives and spirits but our collective hopes for humanity. In his report to the Millennium Summit in 2000, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged "that every seriously affected country have a national plan of action in place within one year of the Summit;" recommended explicit goals for reducing HIV infection rates; challenged the developed countries to come up with effective and affordable vaccines against HIV through public-private partnerships; called for better care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS; and proposed that governments, the pharmaceutical industry and international institutions work together to ensure that HIV-related drugs are widely accessible where they are needed.[14]

In his February 2001 report to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on HIV /AIDS, the Secretary-General spoke of the AIDS epidemic as a "crisis of governance and a crisis of leadership." And he went further to say that "leadership – at the global as well as the country level – is the single most important factor in reversing the epidemic."[15]

Just a few months later, in what has become an intense campaign at the highest levels of international cooperation, the Secretary-General launched a 'Call to action' at the African Leaders' Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and other Infectious Diseases in April 2001, proposing a multi-billion dollar a year Global AIDS and Health Fund, with support to come from donor and developing country governments and the private sector. Mr. Annan has made the personal pledge of the $100,000 grant he is to receive along with the Philadelphia Liberty Award.

Taking every opportunity to impress the need for such a full scale assault against HIV/AIDS, the Secretary-General followed up with a series of meetings, including an international consultation in June 2001 with more than 200 representatives from 50 countries, multilaterals and NGOs, private foundations and others, aimed at having the fund operational as soon as possible. Responses to the Secretary-General's call have come from governments, the private sector and the foundation world, including $1 million from Winterthur Insurance, a Credit Suisse Group company and, in an extraordinary action, $100 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest private donor to date.

In June 2001, the United Nations General Assembly convened its first ever special session on a disease as high-level national delegations pledged a global commitment for greater efforts at the national, regional and international levels and concrete targets for action to fight the epidemic and reverse its deadly course. In a Declaration of Commitment, 'Global Crisis – Global Action', the Assembly outlined priority areas for action to be: prevention, improved access to care and treatment, care of children orphaned by AIDS, expanded public/private partnerships, multisectoral responses and a significant infusion of financial support.[16]

The impact of HIV/AIDS is crushing the attempts of countries all over the world to put human development and the rights of women and children first. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, for example, an

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Geoffrey Canada grew up in Harlem on the streets of one of New York's roughest neighbourhoods – and stayed, dedicating his life to helping children and their families at risk of drugs, violence and other threats with programmes for education, housing and non-violence.**

World Summit
for Children

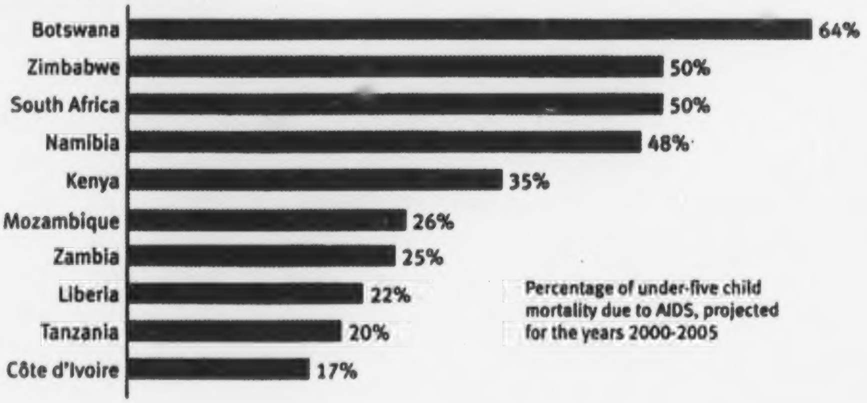
# Goal
# 7

## For children and development in the 1990s

## *Improve protection of children in especially difficult circumstances*

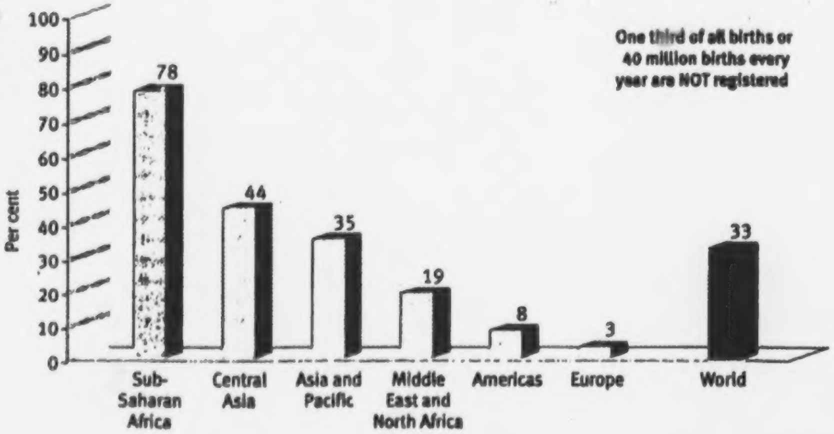
The categories are broad: working children, children in armed conflict, refugee children, sexually abused/exploited children, incarcerated children, children with disabilities and children from socially disadvantaged groups. Data are especially hard to find for these children, due to the secretive, illegal or pervasive nature of these activities.

**AIDS and child mortality**



Percentage of under-five child mortality due to AIDS, projected for the years 2000-2005

**Percentage births not registered, 1998**



One third of all births or 40 million births every year are NOT registered

Sources: United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001; United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, 'A world fit for children', Revised draft outcome document A/AC-256/CRP.6/Rev. 3, United Nations, New York, June 2001.

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estimated 210,000 adults and children contracted the virus in 2000, bringing the total number of people living with HIV to 1.8 million. Haiti is the worst affected country in the region, with an estimated 74,000 children orphaned by AIDS.[17]

But the epidemic is at its most devastating in southern and eastern Africa where, after decades of steady improvement, life expectancy figures are plummeting to the levels associated with the pre-independence, colonial period. Africa's experience of HIV/AIDS over the last 10 years has diverged so dramatically and terrifyingly from that of industrialized countries not because a plague has hit it at random, still less because its sexual traditions are different, but rather because of its poverty: AIDS is the most savage index of the inequality of our world. Any infection thrives in conditions of poverty, malnutrition and unsafe water: It is as true of HIV/AIDS as it is of tuberculosis and measles.

The industrialized nations have markedly failed to show the requisite global leadership in the field of HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, leadership has also been required of the African countries bearing the main brunt of the epidemic – and the responses of individual governments to its mounting threat have been markedly varied. Some have seemed for many years determined to pursue an ostrich-like approach, taking no account of the rising tide of infection in the region until it became an unstoppable flood. In contrast Uganda, it is widely recognized, took on a leadership role in the late 1980s and early 1990s: The Government there launched huge public-education campaigns that educated people about how HIV is transmitted, promoted the use of condoms and talked about the need for safe sex. President Yoweri Museveni himself showed leadership on the issue, talking openly about the virus and its sexual transmission route despite widespread taboos in the region against such frank discussion of sex. As a result, while no one would underestimate the pain and loss Ugandans have suffered at the hands of HIV/AIDS, the country has brought the epidemic under control: Its HIV-infection rate has dropped from 30 per cent of adults in the early 1990s to 10 per cent, one of the lowest rates in the eastern part of Africa.

When a country finds itself in such dire circumstances the need for leadership becomes all the more desperate. In Botswana, the Government has started on the long and painful road to recovery by becoming the first country in Africa to launch a national programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV. A pilot project in the cities of Francistown and Gaborone started in April 1999 and is being extended nationwide between July 2000 and December 2001. It provides pregnant women with information and education, and voluntary and confidential counselling and testing, and provides antiretroviral drugs for those who are HIV positive, during their pregnancy and labour, as well as AZT syrup for the baby in its first month of life.[18]

Africa does not provide the only leadership models in the field of HIV/AIDS. Thailand also deserves great credit: It was the first Asian nation to recognize that it had a major HIV/AIDS problem and to make tackling the disease an urgent priority. Warned by the catastrophic losses in Africa, Thai officials attacked their HIV epidemic at an earlier stage, launching extensive education campaigns. The '100% Condom Campaign' became national policy in 1991 and condom use was not only heavily promoted, particularly to the young, but the Ministry of Public Health also started providing 60 million condoms a year free of charge, mainly to sex workers. Condom use soon increased by over 30 per cent and new HIV infections were radically reduced.[19]

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**"If children need peace, they must do something." This is the motto of Farid Dadashev, an 11-year-old from Azerbaijan, who collected more than 1,000 signatures in his work in the Azerbaijan Child to Child Peace Network.**

## Children at the centre of policy

The Government in Mauritius, meanwhile, has shown leadership in dealing with the growing problem of child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children. It has set up a Child Protection Unit in partnership with UNICEF, the British High Commission and the NGO Soroptimist International. Officers of the unit have been trained and sensitized over a two-year period by child-protection experts from the United Kingdom and hundreds of children have already benefited from the greater understanding the unit has fostered. Meanwhile, the Government has also made substantial efforts to tackle child abuse at other levels, with an expansion of its early childhood development (ECD) programmes and extensive 'better parenting' education schemes.[20]

Some national governments have shown leadership by recognizing the paramount importance of a particular policy and moving heaven and earth to bring it about. The decision by Malawi in 1994 to guarantee universal free primary education was just such a case. This was an enormously popular move that resulted in school attendance skyrocketing from 1.9 million to 2.9 million. The school system is still straining to meet the demands – but the fee-free schooling remains in place. As might be expected, moreover, a government that shows such a commitment to human development in one area is setting a similar example in others. Malawi has made women's empowerment a priority, formulating a national gender policy in 2000 as well as joining other countries around the world in organizing the campaign '16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women'. In addition, the Government has sustained immunization levels over 80 per cent: There were no cases of measles during 2000 and there have been no cases of polio since 1992.[21]

Cambodia, China and the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic have also set particularly good examples in the field of immunization. Through multiple National Immunization Days and a movement-based approach backed by strong governmental commitment, both China and Lao PDR reached the goal of polio-free status by the end of 2000.[22] Cambodia has gained the same status, succeeding in eliminating polio in three years despite huge obstacles. In 2000, the country showed a particular commitment to spreading the benefits of immunization to people in remote, underserved areas, reaching more of these – 65 per cent – than ever before.[23] In Thailand, meanwhile, immunization is all but universal: The Government sustains the vaccination programme out of its own budget and has stressed that it is capable of ensuring that no children under five die of vaccine-preventable diseases. The goal of freedom from polio has also been achieved by Pacific Island Nations, which are also well placed to eliminate measles and neonatal tetanus – seven countries in the region have achieved and maintained 90 per cent immunization coverage.

On a more general level, in recent years there have been national governments that have demonstrated leadership in attempting to protect the rights and improve the lives of children – and other national governments that have a distressingly poor record. Oman's reduction in under-five mortality has been spectacular over the last two decades – child deaths have fallen from 146 in 1980 to 16 in 1999, an indication of the particular commitment that the Government, and especially its Health Minister, Dr. Ali bin Mohammed bin Moosa, has shown to the cause of children's health.

Jamaica, meanwhile, has shown an encouraging willingness to recognize that children need to be placed at the centre of policy and programmes and the Government is establishing a Child

Development Agency that will have a broad brief to monitor, evaluate and set standards. It is also taking the problems of adolescents more seriously than ever before by establishing a National Youth Development Centre and putting a national youth policy in place.[24]

Venezuela's abolition of fees for hospitals and health centres and of enrolment fees for primary education has been another extremely positive recent move – as has been the incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into the Constitution and the new law for children and adolescents.[25] In Syria, a new initiative to provide second-chance education for 75,000 adolescent girls is a practical demonstration of the Government's increasing commitment to enhancing the status of women.

In Cape Verde, the Government has shown a laudable commitment to devoting resources to children: Throughout the 1990s it dedicated 29 per cent of its budget to sectors directly linked to children's development and has boosted this to 34 per cent in the last two years, hugely outstripping the 20 per cent of budgets that the 20/20 Initiative recommends.[26]

## Corporate leadership

But instances of leadership are by no means confined to the public sector. The chief executive of a corporation who transcended the narrow criteria of 'competitiveness' or the norms of similar companies by introducing strict ethical standards against child labour and in support of families would similarly be setting an example. This kind of private-sector far-sightedness can be seen in Cambodia, where Mr. Bun Barang, the dealer who controls almost all of the country's salt, has committed to iodizing 60 per cent of his production in 2001 and 100 per cent of that in 2002.[27]

There is ample room for demonstrating that corporations are capable of this kind of enlightened and ethical leadership in the world's fight against HIV/AIDS. The Coca-Cola Company recently announced that it would put its enormous distribution network – which manages to get soft drinks to nearly every nook of the African continent – to help bring condoms, testing kits and literature to remote clinics. Coca-Cola is one of many corporations that have joined the Global Business Council on HIV and AIDS, an effort to mobilize the private sector that is chaired by William Roedy, president of MTV Networks International and includes such companies as AOL Time Warner, MAC Cosmetics and Unilever.[28]

The Brazilian Government, backed by a strong social movement, has proved beyond doubt that full-scale treatment of AIDS patients is possible in the developing world. Since 1997, every AIDS patient in Brazil has received for free the same triple cocktails that keep people alive in North America and Europe. This has meant, for example, that seven-year-old Emerson, who has had HIV since birth but was not diagnosed until he was six, is still living a healthy, happy life. As a result Brazil has halved its AIDS death rate, cut the transmission rate and stabilized the epidemic.

But Brazil has only been able to do so by making copies of brand-name drugs, which it has been doing since 1998. The cost of those medicines has, as a result, been slashed: The triple cocktail in Rio de Janeiro costs $3,000 a year compared with $15,000 in New York, and Brazil expects to bring the annual cost down to as low as $700 in the near future.

The strength of Brazil's social movements in the 1990s resulted in the Government adopting and maintaining a radical AIDS policy. José Sarney, Brazil's first civilian President after military rule and a Senator in 1996 when he heard about the success of the triple cocktail, supported it as a priority even for the poorest: "I saw

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**At 12, Aminata Diallo 'adopted' some kids in her Senegalese village who now regularly receive vaccinations. "Their names are in my notebook. I'm going to track them individually to make sure they don't miss an appointment." Now 22, Diallo continues to be dedicated to the cause of children and has been managing a children's network.**

PANEL
3

# Children of Liberia: Determined to change destiny

Liberia still bears the scars of the civil war that lasted from 1989 to 1997. One hundred and fifty thousand people were killed, 1 million people internally displaced and 666,000 Liberians were driven from the country. Perhaps most horrifying, however, 15,000 children – some as young as six years old – were trained as soldiers. With so many lives stolen and the country's infrastructure destroyed, there seemed little hope for the children of Liberia.

Yet, somehow, the country has become stronger and its people more determined and there is no better illustration than the children themselves, who were once used as tools for destruction but who now work diligently to improve their lot.

Sixteen-year-old Solomon is one example of a youth determined to change his destiny. Once a member of one of the most feared groups of boy soldiers, Solomon now participates in a UNICEF-supported reintegration and life skills programme. Struggling to overcome his tragic past, he explains, "I want to get the bad, bad things out of my heart." Asked what he hopes for the future, he replies in a soft voice, "I want to go back to school. I want to be born again as a child."

Liberia is filled with cases of children who are being 'born again'. While civil unrest, international sanctions and poor social conditions continue to create challenges for children, it is their optimistic spirit that promises the rebirth they seek.

"Children went and fought with the rebels and they still act like rebels," explained Magistrate Perry about juvenile crime in Liberia. In the past, children who were seen to be problematic were placed in detention with adults and exposed to harsh corporal punishment and abuse. This, however, only served to increase and perpetuate the problem. In response, UNICEF and the Office of the Chief Justice launched an effort to renovate courthouses so that they included juvenile hearing areas. Magistrates received training about juvenile justice. UNICEF sponsored a trip for the Chief Justice of Liberia to travel to Namibia and South Africa to observe their juvenile justice programmes. By the end of 2000, juvenile justice programmes had been established in four counties where detention of minors has been reduced by 95 per cent.

For the first time in Liberia's history, juveniles are receiving special consideration from the courts. Deputy Inspector David White, a veteran police officer in the town of Tubmanburg, says the training he received has made a difference. "I used to handle children wrong. I would handle them roughly," he confesses. "Now, we have been told not to treat juveniles as criminals. Treat them as if they are your own children."

Instead of 'bad children', it is 'bad circumstances' that are addressed and helpful solutions sought. Youth offenders are now referred to organizations where counsellors bring families together to work out problems and where they receive vocational skills training. Zoe Thomas is one beneficiary of this effort. The 19-year-old woman works intently at a foot-powered sewing machine, making a child's dress. "I want to be a better person," she says. "I want to work and help myself." Other youth affected by war have learned to make agricultural tools out of decommissioned weapons in order to help their communities.

Children who were robbed of basic education because of the civil war partake in a UNICEF-sponsored accelerated learning programme which allows overage students to return to school and make up what they missed. A 22-year-old man in the grade 3 to 4 class declares, "I came back cu' I wanted to learn. I hope to be a medical doctor someday."

Entire communities are infused with attitudes of optimism and a willingness to work, despite past disappointments and hardship. When WHO, UNICEF and the Liberian Ministry of Health approached Bong County to participate in the polio eradication campaign, there was full participation at every level, from governments to households. In 2000, six rounds of mass vaccinations were carried out, and the nation achieved total coverage of 90 per cent. Bong County achieved an incredible 100 per cent. "We don't usually fail in this county," beamed the county superintendent.

Children are not only assisted but also play a significant role in assisting others. Radio C'est la Vie, launched in March 2000, is run mainly by children who, "educate both children and adults in a wide range of social issues," explains Korlu Willie, a ninth grader. For instance, the station "teaches kids how to take care of themselves, to listen to their parents. Sometimes we interview girls who are not going to school and who leave their parents and get involved with men and get pregnant. It is good for children to speak out because they learn more. They listen to other children."

When the helpless become the helpers, when the victims become victors, when the children become the saviours, the world must listen. The world must learn.

that most of the medicine in the cocktail would not be available to the poor, and I felt that we were talking about the survival of the species."[29] Senator Sarney proposed a law guaranteeing every AIDS patient this treatment and the bill passed. At the beginning of 1999, Brazil's economy was in dire trouble and the Government came under huge pressure to cut the budget by ditching the AIDS programme. Supported by civil society, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso held firm, sure that the far-sighted policy had to stand.

There is ample room for the pharmaceutical corporations to demonstrate their sense of responsibility and imagination in response to the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. A start in this respect has been made by Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, which announced that it would sell its patented AIDS medicines, didanosine and stavudine, for $1 a day to any African country working to combat the disease with the help of key international agencies, including UNICEF. The initiative comes in the wake of strong local and international pressure. The students of Yale University in the United States, for example, launched a major campaign insisting that the University, which earns $40 million a year by holding the patent for stavudine, use its influence to ensure that AIDS drugs were made available at low cost in Africa and other poor countries. In addition, an Indian drug producer offered to make a generic version of stavudine available at a price so significantly lower that it could be within the reach of hard-hit health systems in sub-Saharan Africa.

More recently still, Pfizer offered to make fluconazole – used to treat a fungal brain infection common in AIDS patients – available for free in the least developed countries and will spend $11 million to build a training centre in Uganda for doctors fighting AIDS.[30] GlaxoSmithKline announced that it will provide three AIDS drugs and a malaria medication at cost to 63 of the world's poorest countries.[31] And in a decision long fought for by AIDS activists, a group of patent-holding pharmaceutical companies dropped its challenge to the South African law that would allow the production of cheaper drugs. These are promising, welcome initiatives but there is still much more to be done.[32]

Some private companies have shown a different kind of leadership in finding a way in which hi-tech, cutting-edge commerce can serve the needs of the poorest. Finnish mobile-phone giant Nokia, for example, has launched child-oriented social initiatives in many countries, including supporting the *Little Master* newspaper in China, developing the business skills of South African youth and participating in a mentoring programme in Germany. "As we share in the belief that prevention is better than cure," the company says, "we take part in long-term projects aimed at helping young people create a firm foundation for themselves and their future."[33] The sale of mobile phones has also benefited Palestinian children: The Egyptian company MobiNil donated $140,000 of its proceeds to UNICEF programmes in the West Bank and Gaza.[34] Meanwhile in Bangladesh, GrameenPhone is donating $2 to UNICEF for every mobile phone sold.[35] Cisco Systems Inc. has entered into partnership with the UN Development Programme to create Netaid.org, which is playing a vital role in building a Global Movement for Children in the lead-up to the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children in September 2001.

It is not only 'new-generation', hi-tech companies that are showing leadership for children, however. The Tata Iron Company in India, which was a founding partner of the UN Global Compact with the private sector, runs an extensive and integrated maternal and child health programme for both employees and

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

Every street child in Addis Ababa knows Gash Abera Molla, the foundation started by Ethiopian artist and musician **Seleshe Demesse** to fight environmental degradation in the city. Some 13,000 children and adolescents, many of them street children, have mobilized to help clean-up the city and to landscape areas that were former eyesores.

## Voices of Young People...

# On changing the world with children

**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes:**

- ☐ "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family"
- ☐ that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"
- ☐ that childhood is "entitled to special care and assistance."

*"All children should have the right to study," "The right to enjoy their parents care," "the right to play."*

**Youth, China**

*"The most important thing for me has been the opportunity I have had to express my feelings, to say what I feel, this is the difference with other schools, where that does not happen."*

**Sara, eighth-grader, Dominican Republic, speaking about her school**

*"I think that as Salvadorans we have to recognize that the earthquakes of 13 January and February were very hard, and that without the help of the international community, we would still be looking for solutions that, thanks to their help, we have already resolved. The responsibility is not that of a man or a name, we all share it, from the smallest to the biggest..."*

**Rosenberg, 18, El Salvador**

*"Children have the right to experience happy moments, too."*

**Girl, 12, Germany**

*"In my opinion, the worst image of young people in the media is when they show that young people are indifferent."*

**Efthimis, 15, Greece**

*"I thought it would be a failure. I thought of myself as an ambassador for teens everywhere. If I failed people would label the next generation irresponsible and useless. I need to prove people wrong."*

**Kuheli, 15, India, on a vaccination project funded by Netaid.org**

*"We as a young people behind our appearances as bad teenagers or good or anything, we still need [to] let people know that we still have brain and dare to speak that we think it is true."*

**Seira, 20, Indonesia**

*[Involvement in decision-making] "gives you a feeling of cooperation, makes you feel like a grown up, and gives you self-confidence."*

**Youth, Islamic Republic of Iran**

*"[We] want to work with other young people, we also want to be a part of the solution."*

**Youth, Jamaica**

*"The teenagers on TV are different with the reality and common of us. They are splendid and the miniature of adult."*

**Ji-Hye, 12, Republic of Korea**

*"It is good for the children to speak out because they learn more. They listen to other children."*

**Korlu, ninth-grader, Liberia**

*"We have to work from within and not wait for other people to do everything."*

**Youth, Peru**

*"If I could change one thing about the world, it would be that children and young people are involved in all decisions that affect their lives. There should be a shadow youth council for all government councils so that young people can review and have an input in what goes on in their area."*

**Claire, 17, United Kingdom**

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others who live within a 50-kilometre radius of its production headquarters. Tata routinely spends 10 per cent of its profits on social-service activities.[36]

## Personal leadership

The idea of leadership is normally associated more with individuals than with organizations. It is important to recognize that the most inspirational examples of leadership are often those by ordinary people who through their extraordinary actions show what is possible *(see Panel 3).*

Individuals who use their celebrity and popular respect for the greater social good can also have a huge influence. A classic example of this kind of leadership on behalf of children came in October 1999 when 23 of the leading intellectuals in Latin America and the Caribbean issued a moving and outspoken manifesto challenging governments and citizens throughout the region to put aside their differences and establish a 'social pact' for the region's 192 million children and adolescents. The group – which included writers Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Elena Poniatowska and Ernesto Sábato – warned of the dire consequences for all if business as usual continues. "In Latin America," said Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano, "the majority of children are poor, and the majority of the poor are children. Society uses them, punishes them, sometimes kills them: it almost never listens to them and it never understands them." The Chilean novelist Isabel Allende added: "Millions of children die of neglect that is cruelly tolerated by society. And we are all part of that society. You and I. Our governments have all ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Let's demand that it be respected."

If a global opinion poll were to be conducted asking people which living person on the international stage best embodied the concept of leadership, it is virtually certain that Nelson Mandela would come out near or at the top. The former President of South Africa has been an inspiration to people all over the world not merely because of his leadership of a transparently just cause – the enfranchisement and liberation of black people in his country from apartheid – nor even because of the immense self-sacrifice involved in spending 27 years in prison for his profoundly held principles. Since his retirement from the presidency 'Madiba' (as he is respectfully known) has continued to work tirelessly for the mass of people who are denied their rights, using his immense moral presence on the international stage for good – notably in attempting to resolve conflict and build peace in many quarters of the African continent.

Along with Graça Machel, a former Minister of Education in Mozambique and a world leader on the issue of children caught up in armed conflict, Madiba has dedicated himself to the cause of children's rights. With UNICEF and other key children's agencies, Machel and Madiba aim to enlist the commitment of world leaders to do whatever it takes to deliver a world fit for children. "The future of our children lies in leadership and the choices leaders make," they have said. "We call on those we have called on before to join us in a new global partnership that is committed to this change. We invite those whom we have never met to join us in the global movement for children."[37]

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Twenty-four-year-old journalist Kodjo Djissenou has been a human rights leader and activist for half of his life: In 1994 in his native Togo he founded *La Conscience*, an NGO that educates and organizes for human rights and democracy. *La Conscience* is also the name of the newspaper he publishes that is written entirely by young people. "If there is hope for change," Djissenou says, "it lies with the nation's young people."**

# II

# "To change the world with children"

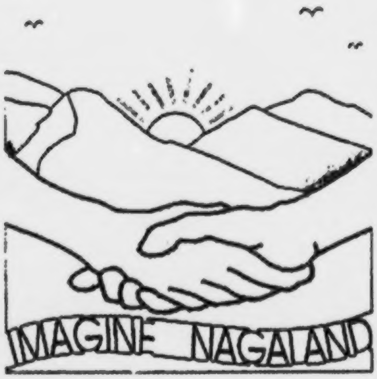
Since the earliest days of its existence, UNICEF has called the world's attention to the situation of children – to the many of them bruised by the operation of national societies and the global economy, to the ways in which they have suffered because of their parents' poverty, to how their health has suffered through lack of food or immunization and their development through poor health, abuse and neglect, and lack of education – and has taken action to offset the damage. During the 1980s, UNICEF focused its energies on the child-health revolution, driven by the knowledge that easy-to-understand processes such as immunization, breastfeeding and oral rehydration therapy would save the lives of millions of infants. The achievements were remarkable, demonstrating that when political will, knowledge and resources converge, seemingly intractable problems could be solved.

***A young girl being measured for a school uniform in Rajasthan, India***

PANEL

4

# Educate every child: The dreams of Nagaland



*"Imagine Nagaland" logo created by Ms. Abokou Metha, a college student attending the Regional Meeting leading to the Special Session on Children.*

On the remote, hilly north-eastern corner of India bordering Myanmar lies Nagaland, a tiny state embroiled in nearly a half century of continuous conflict. The population of 2 million is tired of violence, threats of extortion and living in fear. A fragile ceasefire has existed for the last three years. One college student today writes, "I can recall peace only when I was a small child – not after that."

With the support of the Chief Secretary of Nagaland, the highest-ranking bureaucrat in the state, a series of action research workshops were initiated in Nagaland early in 2001 to create change. In the workshops, individuals are asked to 'Imagine Nagaland' by focusing on what they want for their state rather than on the problems they currently face. Participants move through a four-phase cycle of interviews – Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. Over 1,000 interviews have already been conducted and 20,000 more are planned. Each interview is to generate six additional interviews, setting off a ripple effect that will reach into every corner of Nagaland society, engaging adults and children in the common cause of creating their new society.

In April 2001, more than 70 participants drawn from diverse stakeholder groups and originating from eight districts gathered for a "Discovery Phase" workshop. They represented 'Nagaland glue' – junior, middle and senior government officials, media, teachers, legislators and NGOs, including church leaders and human rights activists. **But importantly, almost one third of the participants were children and young people from different tribal origins. For many of the adults, this was their first experience of interacting on an equal footing with the younger generation.**

Initially young people and adults began visioning exercises separately. When asked "What gives life to Nagaland?" adults spoke of their sense of pride in their rich cultural heritage, their stoic acceptance of the current situation, their classless and casteless society and strong religious convictions and their yearning for peace and development.

The younger group appeared more clearly focused on the future rather than the past. Children were concerned that "Nagaland needs more freedom from violence." They spoke about community development as being more important than individual development. They appealed for parks and sports fields. And they expressed the need for primary education because, as they put it, "even a building without a strong foundation can fall." One student wrote:

*O' future Nagas, let's stop this evil*
*Let there be peace again*
*Stop the gun culture, it's not ours*
*For we cannot survive in this pool of*
*Hatred, conflict and corruption.*

By the end of the first day, the young people's honesty and eloquence, represented in paintings, slogans and poems, had jolted the adults. Children summed up what they had "more of" in comparison with the maturity, experience and responsibilities of adults. "We're more educated, more creative, more sincere and courageous and we're more action-oriented." Their wish-list was clear – peace, unity, reforestation, more state advances in science and technology and guaranteed employment on leaving school.

Writing in the local *Northeast Herald* newspaper, a group of participating journalists commented, "Some of us who thought we knew what the problem in Naga society is discovered that we didn't know nearly enough." Listening to schoolchildren and college youth, they realized "these are the people with the biggest stakes in the future.... Many of them were quite clear about the kind of future they long for and the clarity of their thinking zapped us! Clearly we were hearing and experiencing their cry of anguish."

In a second workshop, two polls of both interviewers and interviewees were conducted on the 10 imperatives of the Rallying Call for Children. 'Educate Every Child' was foremost in everyone's mind, followed by 'Care for every Child', 'Fight HIV/AIDS' and 'Listen to Children.' "Children are the leaders of tomorrow – so we must educate them properly if we are to be led properly," wrote one respondent.

And a student echoed with, "I imagine a Nagaland where people have less complaints and criticism, children [are] eagerly involved in school because of the good facilities and extra-curricular activities, villages [are] involved in their own development and everyone [is] involved and aware of their cultural heritage."

Will the dream stories that are told, retold and interpreted ultimately influence the inner dialogue of the people of Nagaland, and will such internal change give greater momentum to the social change that is needed? Yes, according to one college youth who wrote in a letter, "Obviously, what we are facing now would be the consequence of what our predecessors had already committed. So it is the right time to reshape our society again. Or else the future situation will again be the result of the present, and we will be held responsible for that."

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And then, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989 by the UN General Assembly and entered into force a year later, profoundly changed the world's engagement with children. Just like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Convention articulated something fundamental about humanity's sense of itself and acted as a watershed and reference point for all future generations that had never been there before. The Convention presented a coherent vision of children's rights and how society should provide for them – expressed in the terms of a legal document that asked national governments to sign up to those terms and thereafter be held accountable for them.

The Convention is transforming the landscape not simply because ratifying governments have acknowledged a legal responsibility, but also because the acceptance of the idea of child rights creates its own dynamic. The world's understanding of children is changing. Seen through the Convention's lens, the child is an active and contributing member of a family, community and society. It is becoming evident that when adults interact with children in ways built on respect for their rights, everything changes.

This has been the quiet but vital drama played out in every country of the world over the last decade: children learning about their rights and families and communities learning how to embrace the principle of child rights and to change their attitudes and behaviours to match *(see Panel 4)*.

## Children's participation

The child's perspective is not an add-on: The world looks different from his or her vantage point. Children's participation changes thinking and alters the design of projects and programmes. "If you listen to children, you do things better."[38]

When PLAN International UK started a housebuilding programme in Guatemala, for example, it at first intended to build houses with one room. But following consultation with the families who were going to

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**"Only a healthy society can generate healthy companies," says Brazilian Oded Grajew, who founded Instituto Ethos, an association of companies dedicated to developing socially responsible business, and Fundaçao Abrinq, a child rights organization that promotes child-friendly companies.**

PANEL
5

# PYALARA: Young Palestinian leaders

## The Youth Times

صحيفة ال «يوث تايمز»

Through panoramic glass windows of a sun-drenched office, young Palestinian men and women look out over one of the main crossroads near Jerusalem. They watch the heavy traffic pass by and reflect on their lives. They have reached a stage where choices have to be made. There will be lifestyles to follow, skills to learn, a future to plan.

They have come here – to the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA) – to join with others facing similar life decisions and to seek some peace from the horrors of conflict. At a time when many young Palestinians express fears that there is nothing more to lose; that they see no reason for living or working or studying; that they feel helpless and voiceless; PYALARA offers an alternative. With support from UNICEF, Cordaid (the Netherlands), Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Jerusalem), European Union, Foundation for Middle East Peace and other organizations, PYALARA draws approximately 150 youth, 14–22 years old.

"We do not aim at converting young people, but we work hard to show the majority of our young people a way out," said Hania Bitar, the director general of the Association. "Noam Chomsky sees creativity and not acquisitiveness as the most fundamental human need. We aim at making our young members play an active role in serving their country and in expressing their love and nationalism in a creative and constructive way," she added.

PYALARA emphasizes empowerment through communication and media skills, ongoing workshops on leadership and children's rights, peer solidarity and counselling. As one of several community service projects, it supports student journalists who publish *The Youth Times*, the first and only youth paper in the Palestinian region. Begun in 1998, the 16-page monthly newspaper, with a circulation of 7,000, is written in English and Arabic. The students, with training and guidance from staff and volunteers, craft the periodical from story ideas through final production. With a newly designed website ‹www.pyalara.org›, the paper is now available throughout the world.

More than 2,000 young Palestinians have submitted their writings to PYALARA, reaching out to the national, regional and international reader. In a world of journalism where adult voices control the highest notes, the pens and voices of these young Palestinian writers try to press on the right chords. This year the journalists are preparing a book with the working title 'Young voices from Palestine', introducing to the world first-hand accounts of the lives of young Palestinians.

But these young people are more than journalists; they are young Palestinian leaders. Recognizing the physical and psychological toll of the political situation, PYALARA launched an outreach component called 'We Care'. This project trains college students in individual and group counselling, helping youth to help youth. With their willingness to give support, young adults eventually succeed in raising the spirits of their peers by releasing their tension, discussing their psychological, emotional and other problems and offering tangible solutions.

"When Ramallah was bombarded two days ago, I held my little sister closely...I shut her ears with my hands...I did not want her to hear the shooting and the bombardment.... I failed...she left me and rushed to my mom who herself was crying hysterically and feeling helpless," explained Dima, an 18-year-old, first-year student at Birzeit University.

"At PYALARA hope takes a more concrete form," explained Saleem Habash, an 18-year-old from Ramallah and one of the youth founders of PYALARA. "We realize our sense of purpose and belonging, we prioritize our needs and concerns and learn how to act upon them, we acquire skills in media and communication and learn how to spread awareness and open direct means of dialoguing with our peers in Palestine and elsewhere, and we learn ways of helping out our families, peers, society and above all, ourselves."

The 'We Care' project came as a breakthrough providing for the emotional needs of children and young adults going through the psychological turmoil of the violence that pervades their lives. "We are the 'children of the stones' as the media calls us but we are not made of stone! We have broken hearts and misty eyes (not necessarily from tear gas!). Our loved ones are missing and our families are torn apart. The shelling on our cities, villages and camps left deep scars but not only on the crumbling walls," were the words of some young Palestinians.

With the help of UNICEF, a group of Palestinian ministries and NGOs decided to bring some happiness into the hearts of Palestinian children on the occasion of the Palestinian Child's Day, 5th of April. Under the logo 'We want our childhood', PYALARA's young members designed, worked on and presented special TV episodes for children that were broadcasted throughout April. According to Hania Bitar, the message was clear: "In order to survive, persevere and preserve the quality of our lives, we need to allow a space for laughter, for childhood and for innocence."

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live in them, it was decided to opt for a more expensive model with two rooms. Why? Because the consultation had involved not just the adults in the family but also their children. Girls told the researchers that they did not want to have just one room in which everyone would sleep because "then we get touched in places we don't want to be touched."

In a further example, PLAN was involved with a poor community in Nairobi. The adult starting point was that the community's children needed better school buildings. But when the children were consulted separately they came up with their own list of priorities. Yes, they wanted school buildings, but more than that they wanted schools in which they were not beaten and where the teachers actually showed up; they wanted streets without so much rubbish; fathers who didn't come home drunk; and protection from sexual abuse.

As in this case, children's messages can be uncomfortable for adults – but the more uncomfortable the message the more likely it is that it would not have been understood or predicted without children's perspectives being directly sought. This is particularly so in the case of physical or sexual abuse, which researchers have found to be a consistent theme in surveys that have carefully consulted children. When UNICEF in Suriname consulted primary-school-age children during a child rights promotion campaign in Marowijne in July 1999, it found that among the most significant abuses were those involving corporal punishment. As a result, during 2000 it organized follow-up activities aimed at building adults' skills in disciplining children both at school and at home without recourse to physical violence. In addition, adults attended two stress management workshops designed to help them develop self-control.[39]

It can even be well worth consulting children of pre-school age. In a poor district of London, a group of four- and five-year-olds were asked to produce a mural depicting their local environment as it currently was and then as they would like to see it. The researchers found, to their surprise, that the children objected to having play areas covered with grass. Why? The children preferred concrete because grass made it difficult for them to see broken glass, dog excrement and needles discarded by drug addicts.[40]

When it comes to designing projects to benefit adolescents there is something seriously wrong if their own views are not actively sought and taken into account *(see Panel 5)*. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has experienced the value of this kind of consultation over two decades of experience. Not only has the input of adolescent girls fundamentally changed the character of BRAC's schools and programmes, but it has also shattered the original perception of the NGO's workers that such village girls would be more interested in marriage plans than in learning – indicative of the cultural traditions and expectations that constrain children's participation and consultation in many regions of the world. Adolescent girls now train with BRAC as teachers and reading centre coordinators – and as photographers.[41] On a national level, adolescents in Bangladesh are being offered a voice on television: The new private channel, Ekushey Television (ETV), runs a news programme presented by teenagers called *Mukto Khobor*.[42]

In Guatemala, youth groups suffered particular persecution during the periods of dictatorship and youth organizations remain weak. But there are signs of a renaissance and, given that youth organizations provide adolescents' main experience of democracy, their strengthening will be an essential buttress to future human rights in the country. Their experience can be inspirational – not least in their effect on their own members' lives. In the town of Villa Nueva, for example,

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**In Sierra Leone, activist Father Berton Giuseppe, a 69-year-old Italian national who has dedicated the last 30 years to child protection and reintegration, has only one motto in life: to work with children and for children.**

PANEL 6

# Children's opinion polls

Nearly 40,000 children between the ages of 9 and 18 in 72 countries across East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean were the subject of extensive interviews over the last two years, as UNICEF set out to systematically collect their thoughts and opinions on matters that affect them most. In one of the largest multi-country surveys of children's opinions ever carried out, UNICEF queried young people on such topics as school, violence in their lives and their expectations of government. The findings offer a uniquely valuable perspective on the state of the world's children through the eyes of the world's children.

## *The right to education*

About half the children in Europe and Central Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean say they go to school in order to learn. Almost 60 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean spontaneously brought up the right to education when asked about their rights, and over 40 per cent wanted laws to protect that right. In East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF found that half of those polled spontaneously mentioned education as a child's right, and, not surprisingly, that school was the main topic of children's conversations with friends.

When children in Europe and Central Asia were asked what they would tell their teachers if they could say what they thought, 20 per cent said they would ask for better teacher-student relations. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a negative relationship with their teachers was linked with perceived authoritarian attitudes and the lack of space for children to express themselves.

## *Seen, heard and loved*

Over half the children interviewed in Latin America and the Caribbean felt they are not heard, either at home or in school. In Europe and Central Asia, over 60 per cent said their opinion is not sufficiently taken into account by their government. Only 30 per cent felt they can trust their government. Close to 20 per cent of the children thought that voting in elections is ineffective.

When polled on what they would ask of social institutions such as the Church, their mayor, government and laws, Latin American and Caribbean children listed helping the poor and needy as one of their two top concerns. Almost half the children polled in CEE/CIS and Baltic States wanted their country to be a place with a better economic situation and where everybody has a job. Children in all the polling regions asserted their right to be loved.

## *Violence in and outside of the home*

In Europe and Central Asia, 6 out of 10 children reported violent or aggressive behaviour at home and just over one quarter of those interviewed in Latin America and the Caribbean complained of a high level of aggressive behaviour, including shouting and beatings, in their homes. In East Asia and the Pacific, 23 per cent said they are beaten by parents at home, and in some places like Cambodia (44%), East Timor (53%) and Myanmar (40%), the rates are even higher.

Nearly one in five of the children interviewed in Europe and Central Asia felt their neighbourhood was unsafe to walk around in. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the feeling of insecurity was even higher at 43 per cent; about 15 per cent of the children interviewed have themselves been victims of a robbery.

## *HIV/AIDS*

Only 15 per cent of the 14- to 17-year-olds interviewed in the East Asia and Pacific region claimed to know "a lot" about HIV/AIDS. Over half of UNICEF's interviewees in CEE/CIS and Baltic States, and 40 per cent in Western Europe, say they have very little or no information on HIV/AIDS. One third of those interviewed in Latin America and the Caribbean feel uninformed about sex education, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. In countries like Ecuador, Guatemala and Panama, the percentage of children who wrongly believed that in order to avoid becoming infected one must not go near an infected person was around 20 per cent. Four per cent of the respondents said that HIV can be transmitted by touching someone infected with HIV. In Thailand in the East Asia and Pacific region, the rate rises to 10 per cent.

## *Social justice and peace*

Over half the interviewees in Europe and Central Asia believed that children from poor families are discriminated against, and 46 per cent thought that disabled children are treated unfairly. In Western and Central Europe, over 40 per cent felt that children of different ethnic groups are treated unfairly in their country. In Latin America and the Caribbean, about 12 per cent of the children polled listed the right not to be discriminated against as one of the laws they would make to help children and adolescents.

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, one out of five children wished for a country at peace, with an even higher figure of 50 per cent in the Andean countries. And in Europe and Central Asia, about 40 per cent of the children polled by UNICEF said their desires for a country without crime or violence and a country where there would be peace eclipsed their desire for full employment and a better economic situation.

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the Iqui Balam youth group comprises around 50 members of two rival gangs. Following the death by cocaine of a gang leader's younger brother, the group rejected violence and started to engage in theatre, music and community-health activities. They are now reaching a good artistic standard and are developing pieces drawn from personal experience so as to communicate messages about family violence, drug abuse and AIDS. The group is becoming an NGO with UNICEF support, and offering training in leadership as well as in small business management.

Yet the systematic soliciting of children's and adolescents' opinions has hitherto been rare. In an attempt to garner their views in a more systematic way, UNICEF has embarked on a series of regional youth opinion polls, with the long-term aim of constructing a database that will help the organization evaluate whether children's rights are being respected[43] *(see Panel 6).*

## Discrimination against children

Hearing children's voices in this way will make it clearer how the world needs to change if it is to respect their fundamental rights. The flipside of this is that the lack of interest in consulting children hitherto has left them invisible to policy makers at all levels of society and, as European Parliament President Nicole Fontaine has said, children's invisibility has "an inherently discriminatory impact."[44]

The idea that children are discriminated against is a shocking one when people first encounter it. Even veteran activists for children's rights may balk at the idea. After all, our first reaction is to object since children are appealing: they evoke a natural sympathy in us. How could there be such discrimination?

Discrimination against children is usually less direct, less naked than that, for example, against racial or ethnic groups. It is assumed that children and their interests will be represented and safeguarded by adults, whether by their parents, their teachers or other authority figures. But, children have no right to vote or to political representation nor any access to the courts *(see Panel 7).* In many countries they remain the only people whom it is lawful to hit. Their views are rarely solicited or expressed in the media in any meaningful way.

No one is assuming that young children should be given the vote: Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child says clearly that "in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child [should be] given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." Yet it is odd, to say the least, that all over the world adolescents can be married or sent to war years before they are allowed to take part in elections. And in a democracy children's lack of voting power can mean that elected representatives take no notice of children's interests. The net result can be disastrous for children. Over the past 20 years, for example, there has been a growth in child poverty in almost every country in the European Union and the proportion of public expenditure on children has diminished – at a time when there has been a consistent period of economic growth during which overall wealth has increased.

The answer must be two-pronged. Recognizing the likelihood of discrimination, even of an indirect and nonmalicious kind, governments must set up specific mechanisms to ensure that their policies and programmes respect child rights: Some countries have appointed ombudspersons to devise specific mechanisms for taking account of the views and perspectives of children and adolescents. In Bolivia, Offices for the Defence of Children have been set up in 158 municipalities, and the goal is to establish at least one in each of the country's 314

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Candlelight for Health and Education is one of the few organizations that has actively encouraged women's participation in social programmes in Somalia, largely due to the efforts and leadership of its founder, Shukri Ismail, an articulate and dynamic leader who runs Candlelight's on-the-ground operations.**

# Voices of Young People...

## On HIV/AIDS

- ☐ Half of all new cases of HIV occur in young people 15 to 24 years old.
- ☐ There are an estimated 1.4 million children under the age of 15 living with HIV worldwide.
- ☐ 80 per cent of children under the age of 15 living with HIV are children living in Africa.
- ☐ 4.3 million children under the age of 15 have died from AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic.
- ☐ More than 13 million children aged 14 or younger have been orphaned by AIDS.

*"I think we young people don't listen to the elders because in most cases they preach water and drink wine which I think is not fair."*

**Youth, Africa**

*"Most of the campaigns don't involve young people in the design . . . maybe this is why they don't work, because they're just adult ministry of health campaign. They're just not cool!"*

**Youth, Africa**

*"In Azerbaijan parents often oppose, while children welcome sex education."*

**Youth, Azerbaijan**

*"But just knowing about HIV/AIDS is not sufficient to change the way we behave. There is another factor: power. AIDS preys most on those who lack power, and girls are the most vulnerable. They are often pressured or forced into having sex, or are denied information they need to help them make informed decisions. Girls frequently lack the skills to negotiate with boys or men and the confidence to challenge them; girls fear that being too assertive will make them unpopular. Even when a girl makes an informed decision, she may be unable to negotiate safe sex."*

**Hortense, 19, Côte d'Ivoire**

*"They [the neighbours] all know. They assume that we are also HIV positive. People used to really like my mother. Her brothers would help her – and through an NGO she was able to get free testing. That is how she found out she was HIV positive. She then had us tested because she was worried that we would also be infected. Thank God we are all negative. Our neighbours are not like before – they have distanced themselves. They should be distancing themselves from the virus, not from us."*

**Ammanuel, 13 and orphaned by AIDS, Ethiopia**

*"They [our relatives] want to split us up. They want us to be their servants. No one has suggested a way to keep us together and help us. They have picked who they want to take – to make us work for them – not to help us. And we are not willing to be separated. We want to stay together. We would rather eat nothing but beans, as long as we are together."*

**Yemisrach, 21, Ethiopia, whose parents died of AIDS**

*"I have to say that even though I get lots of information about AIDS, I always have the feeling that it concerns somebody else and that it isn't a direct problem for me."*

**Lucie, 15, Central and Eastern Europe**

*"One thing [is] for sure, I want to do things that benefit others. The most urgent need these days is to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, for it is killing our country. Young people can play a big part in this prevention by helping one another stay HIV negative. Youth also meet to engage in constructive activities, working to improve their communities."*

**Teleza, 13, Malawi**

*"We are normal human beings, we can walk and talk."*

**Nkosi Johnson (now deceased), 12, South Africa**

*"I still get sad, but I want to live to see my daughter grow up – I want to live for my daughter."*

**Lan, early 20's and HIV positive, Viet Nam**

municipalities. These offices have been active in denouncing abuses that would previously have gone unnoticed, as in a recent case involving the sexual abuse of an indigenous girl by 11 soldiers where the mobilization of public opinion and the local media resulted in a prosecution that in the past would have been extremely unlikely.[45]

However, governments must also find ways of taking more serious account of the views of children – and of adolescents in particular. The proliferation of youth parliaments, for example, is an important development. But these must be seen not simply as an educational exercise for the children and adolescents involved (as is often the temptation) but as important democratic institutions in their own right. Some of the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States – notably Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova – are blazing a trail in this regard. In Moldova there is not only an elected Children's Parliament that includes representation for institutionalized children but also elected youth councils which work in collaboration with the country's 18 local administrations to involve young people in the decision-making process.[46] In Azerbaijan, meanwhile, the Youth Forum not only allows adolescents to make recommendations to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, but in 2000 it also came up with its own recommendation to Parliament that a group of young people should be attached as consultants to the Social Policy Commission. In addition, Azerbaijan has a higher than average proportion of young people who have been elected as Members of Parliament, including the chairperson of the Children's Organization.[47] In Africa, too, children's parliaments are an idea whose time has come, having been launched in

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Rodwell Jacha of Image Africa Advertising turned his private-sector savvy to benefit a public cause: the fight against child sexual abuse. A media campaign in Zimbabwe on the Day of the African Child 2000 raised awareness on the issue of child sexual abuse and increased the demand for more child-friendly information on child abuse and HIV/AIDS.**

## Voices of Young People...

# On conflict

☐ Of the 35 million refugees and displaced people in the world, 80 per cent are women and children.

☐ Between 1990 and 2000, 2 million children were slaughtered, 6 million injured or permanently disabled and 12 million left homeless because of conflict.

☐ Between 80 per cent and 90 per cent of those who die or are injured in conflicts are civilians – mostly children and their mothers.

☐ Conflict has orphaned or separated more than 1 million children from their families in the last decade of the 20th century.

*"Many adults had supported the Mandate [for peace in Colombia] because they saw it as an educational exercise to help Colombian children learn about good citizenship. Instead, by voting in such huge numbers, and by showing that we really understood what the war was doing to us, we taught adults a lesson – they were the ones who had been letting us down. They were the ones who had not taken part in elections, had given us a weak government and had allowed the war to continue."*

**Mayerly, 16, Colombia**

*"My mother, younger siblings and I fled Senafe together when the air bombardments started. We headed straight to the mountains like everyone else and stayed hidden in the mountain caves for several days. My mother decided I should continue the flight on my own because my siblings and her would only slow me down. I was scared and left all alone, but I managed to hitch a ride to Adi Keyih. There, I met some older boys I knew from my neighbourhood. I travelled with them all the way to Mai Habar. Now all of us live together in one tent. I have not heard from my mother or siblings. It has now been over two months."*

**Mulugeta, 12, Eritrea**

*"What I don't like is the [artillery] shelling. It comes almost every day. The shelling is the reason we had to move the school from the two previous locations. In our previous location, when the shells started to fall, we had to run into the caves for shelter. Some people [from the community] have been hurt by the shelling, but no schoolchildren. Still, I'm scared whenever I hear it."*

**Hadgu, 12, Ethiopia**

*"'The Omagh Bombing'...my best friend was killed.... Although, I haven't got over it, there is now a ceasefire in the North of Ireland, so there has been no more bombs, except the ceasefire is about to break down, and I now feel scared again to know that if the ceasefire breaks down... there will be people only a few hundred miles away being killed monthly, if not weekly, and I feel so helpless to know that there is people too young to understand why...."*

**Briain, 12, Ireland**

*"When happen conflict in Europe, in Kosovo, almost whole world looked at it and listened news. But in Africa are happening more serious things and none does anything. Is that a racism?"*

**Robert, 16, Latvia**

*"I want to get the bad, bad things out of my heart. I want to go back to school. I want to be born again as a child."*

**Solomon, 16, Liberia**

*"The war affects us directly and indirectly...whatever we do, it is with us. We cannot escape from its reach. Like a rubber ball pushed under water, it will surface again and again."*

**Mahesh, 16, Sri Lanka**

*"We have been crying to the world and many people come to take photos and promise to do something, but they never come back and we don't see any result in the situation."*

**Youth, Sudan**

*"I would like you to give a message. Please do your best to tell the world what is happening to us, the children. So that other children don't have to pass through this violence."*

**Girl, 15, abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda who was made to kill a boy who tried to escape**

*"I do not know why the death of a half a million Iraqi children from sanctions does not attract more world attention. I think a half of million children is a whole lot of children."*

**Marwa, 10, United States**

one form or another in nearly every country on the continent.

As children attending the January Preparatory Committee meeting for the UN Special Session on Children said in a joint statement: "We would like adults to meet the promises they have made to us so that we can aspire to a better future.... We also call for the participation of children and young people because we know best the issues which affect us. We call for our governments to respect our rights. The Special Session is for children – you have to hear our voices. After all, if not us, who else is all of this for? Children should be seen and heard, not 'seen and not heard'."[48]

## The Global Movement for Children

The influence of the Convention on the Rights of the Child during the last decade of the 20th century has been profound – and it continues to augment, slowly but surely, with every passing month. Every day new people come into contact with the idea of child rights; every day new officials in both national and local government come to terms with the implications of their legal duty to respect children's rights; every day more children and adolescents gain ground in exercising their right to be listened to and to shape their world by changing the perspectives of the adults around them. This groundswell of opinion and activism for a common purpose is bringing into being a global movement composed of children and their families and those who care about child rights.

To help give this burgeoning mass movement a public voice, six leading organizations that work with children – BRAC, Netaid.org Foundation, PLAN International, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision – came together to announce their commitment to building a Global Movement for Children. This inclusive, worldwide movement aims to draw in all those who believe that the rights of children must be our first priority: from caring parents to government ministers, from responsible corporations to teachers and child-protection officers. It is a movement that is gathering the kind of momentum and moral force that politicians will ignore at their peril. In all its aspects – including the fact that children are full and necessary partners – the Global Movement for Children is about leadership.

Over the months leading up to the UN Special Session on Children – which in September 2001 will review the decade's work since the World Summit for Children and adopt goals and standards for the period ahead – this Movement has been mobilizing support all over the world for a 10-point agenda that aims to 'change the world with children'. Its Rallying Call proclaims: "We, as citizens of every nation and members of families, communities and civil society organizations of every kind, hereby resolve to help mobilize a Global Movement for Children – an unstoppable crusade to end, at long last, the poverty, ill health, violence and discrimination that have needlessly blighted and destroyed so many young lives. Our determination is rooted in the knowledge that in furthering the best interests of children, the most effective actions must come from within the context of our own lives and hearts, and from listening to children and young people themselves. As members of the human family, each of us is responsible. All of us are accountable."

This message is being taken into villages, towns and cities all over the world in a massive grass-roots campaign in which UNICEF is playing a major role. Young and old alike are being asked to 'Say Yes for Children', opting for what they think are the top priorities for action. The same question is being asked on the Internet as people log on to www.gmfc.org and offer their support.

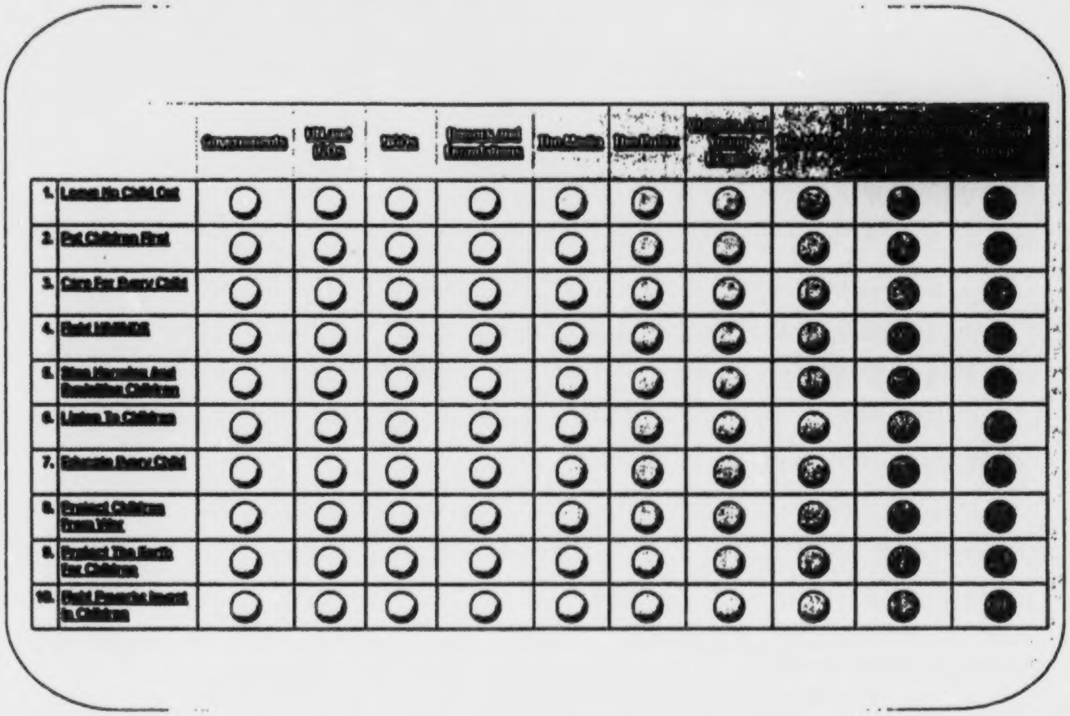
## *Leaders on behalf of children*

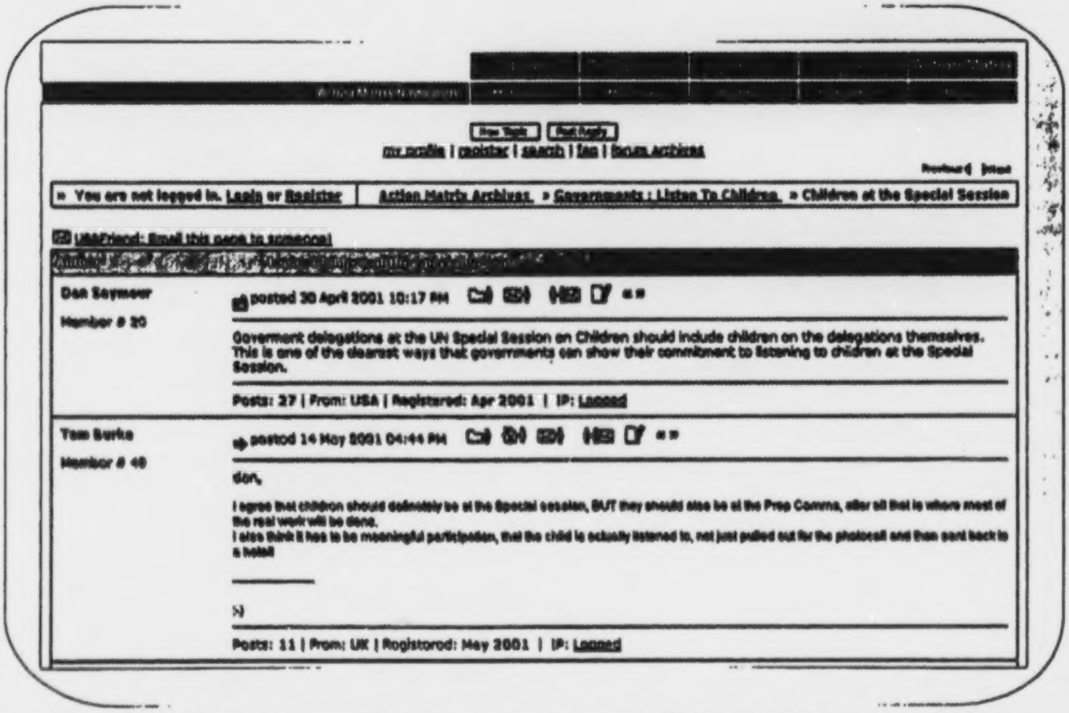
**South Africa's youngest AIDS activist, Nkosi Johnson, died in June 2001 at 12 years of age. The influence of his short life will long be felt. Not only did he defy the prognosis of nine months to live by a decade, Nkosi also lobbied the South African Parliament for equal education rights for children with AIDS, resulting in the passage of an anti-discrimination law for children affected with AIDS who want to attend school.**

PANEL

7

# Global Movement for Children: A role for everyone





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**Dan Seymour**
Member # 20

posted 30 April 2001 10:17 PM

Goverment delegations at the UN Special Session on Children should include children on the delegations themselves. This is one of the clearest ways that governments can show their commitment to listening to children at the Special Session.

Posts: 27 | From: USA | Registered: Apr 2001 | IP: Logged

**Tom Burke**
Member # 40

posted 14 May 2001 04:44 PM

don,

I agree that children should definitely be at the Special session, BUT they should also be at the Prep Comms, after all that is where most of the real work will be done.
I also think it has to be meaningful participation, that the child is actually listened to, not just pulled out for the photocall and then sent back to a hotel!

:)

Posts: 11 | From: UK | Registered: May 2001 | IP: Logged

**Note: This Action Matrix is managed by Save the Children on behalf of the Global Movement for Children.**

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More detailed discussion and ideas for action are also being encouraged and the results of this 'action matrix' are being collated and analysed by the Save the Children Alliance *(see Panel 7)*. The Global Movement website has been set up and maintained by Netaid.org – itself a joint public-private venture between the UN Development Programme and Cisco Systems of the kind the Global Movement aims to inspire – and which another founding partner of the Global Movement for Children, World Vision, is making a particular effort to promote.

The national launches of 'Say Yes for Children' all over the world beginning in March 2001 were spectacular for both their diversity and their high profile: presidents and prime ministers, musical and sports celebrities, religious leaders and writers joined forces with thousands of children to reach out to the widest possible audience. The following were among the highlights:

☐ In Azerbaijan, Say Yes was launched at the International Freestyle Wrestling Tournament, because of the popularity of the sport in the country. World Freestyle Wrestling champion Namiq Abdullayev was among the first to pledge.

☐ The President, Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition in Bangladesh all signed pledge forms in April, demonstrating an impressive cross-party consensus that the cause of children must be a priority.

☐ Say Yes was officially launched on March 26 in Belgium and covered widely by national media and youth publications. A group of the country's leading children's advocates joined forces to promote the campaign, with assistance from the Ministry of Education, the Youth Movement and others. Pledge forms in Dutch and French were widely distributed.

☐ President Stoyanov of Bulgaria signed the pledge in April in Sofia while there was a simultaneous launch in 10 other cities. National television broadcast the Say Yes appeal every day after children's programming and before the main evening news.

☐ The launch of Say Yes in Burkina Faso took place at the Pan-African Festival of Film and Television in Ouagadougou. Film-makers present left their handprints in clay as a graphic way of making their pledge for children.

☐ In Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Sen launched the campaign in a special prime-time television broadcast, filling out the first pledge and urging all Cambodians to follow his example.

☐ Chilean President Lagos used the Say Yes event to launch a National Policy and Integrated Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents, and announced that he would be ceremonially presented with the results of months of pledging in mid-August, on Chile's Day of the Child.

☐ President Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire made the country's first pledge before an audience of 2,000 children, traditional chiefs and business leaders who watched young circus artists, singers and dancers as well as listened to the President of the Children's Parliament.

☐ In Georgia, the bells of the main Sameba Cathedral announced the Say Yes campaign on June 1 as First Lady Nanuli Shevardnadze led the launch at the Children and Youth Palace. With pledge stations around the city and young volunteers distributing pledge forms, 10,000 pledges were received by the end of the day. On 12 June, President Eduard Shevardnadze signed his

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

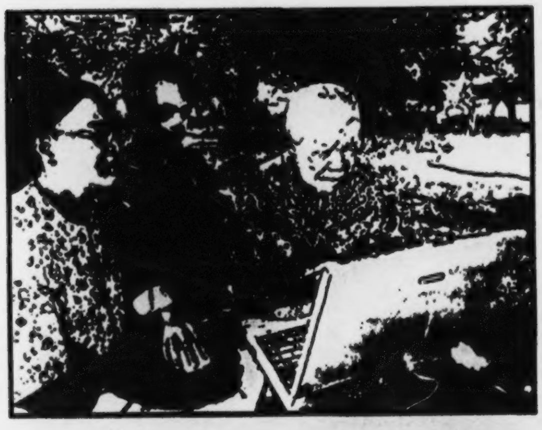
**In Brazil, Padre Júlio Lancelotti has long been advocating on behalf of children and adolescents, most recently in pushing for reform of the institutions that house youth in conflict with the law and providing and protecting housing and other services for HIV-positive women and children.**

say **YES** children

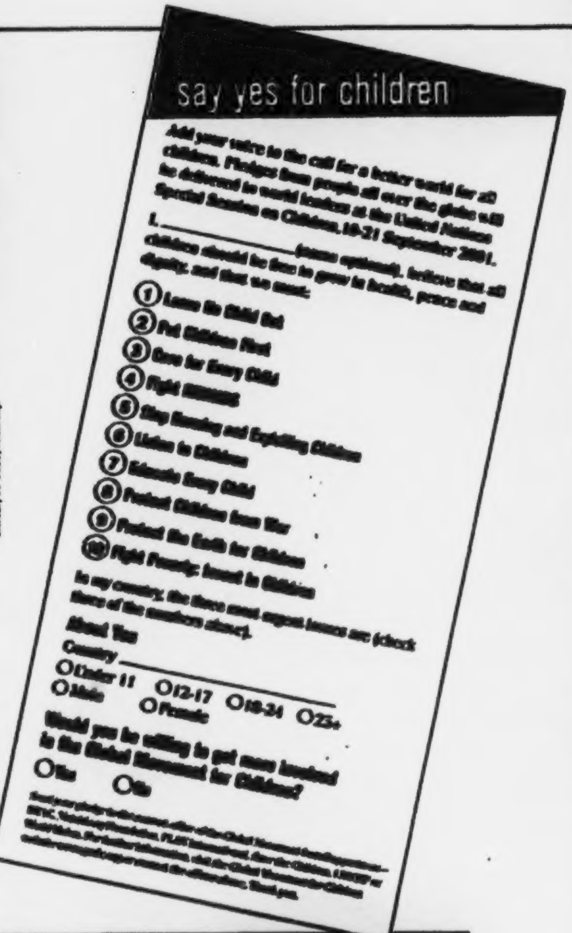
Add your voice to the call for a better world for all children

1. Leave No Child Out
2. Put Children First
3. Care for Every Child
4. Fight HIV/AIDS
5. Stop Harming and Exploiting Children
6. Listen to Children
7. Educate Every Child
8. Protect Children from War
9. Protect the Earth for Children
10. Fight Poverty: Invest in Children

# Say



# Yes for Children



## say yes for children

Add your voice to the call for a better world for all children. Pledges from people all over the globe will be delivered to world leaders at the United Nations Special Session on Children, 19-21 September 2001.

I, ________________ (name optional), believe that all children should be free to grow in health, peace and dignity, and that we must:

① Leave No Child Out
② Put Children First
③ Care for Every Child
④ Fight HIV/AIDS
⑤ Stop Harming and Exploiting Children
⑥ Listen to Children
⑦ Educate Every Child
⑧ Protect Children from War
⑨ Protect the Earth for Children
⑩ Fight Poverty: Invest in Children

In my country, the three most urgent issues are (check three of the numbers above).

**About You**

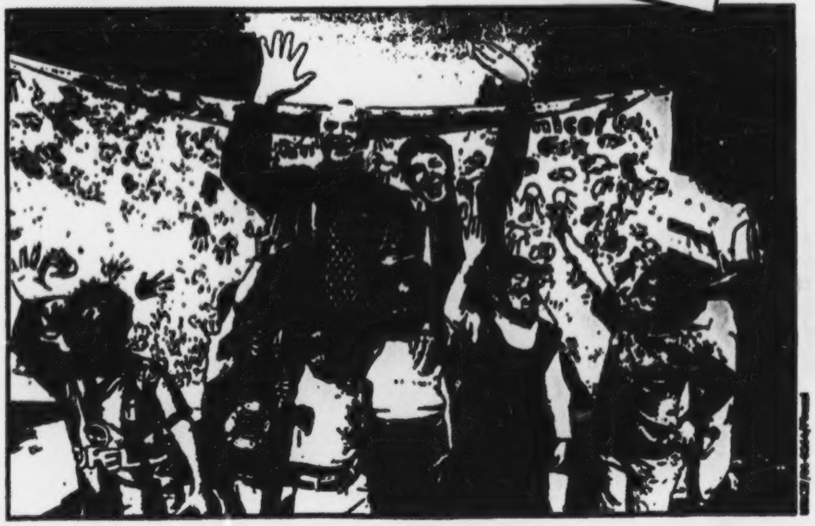
Country ________________

○ Under 11 ○ 12-17 ○ 18-24 ○ 25+
○ Male ○ Female

Would you be willing to get more involved in the Global Movement for Children?

○ Yes ○ No

**A victory for hope.** *The truth is that the world has not been kind to children. The truth is also that the status quo doesn't have to remain the status quo. The 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, launched by UNICEF as one of its contributions to the Global Movement for Children, has mobilized communities around the world, encouraging public discussions about the rights of the child and gathering pledges from millions of people who believe that every child has the right to live in health, peace and dignity. Pictured clockwise from top right: UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan; Harry and Julie Belafonte in South Africa; former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina; Jordan's Queen Rania; Graça Machel, Kamo Masilo and Nelson Mandela in Mozambique; and in every photo, children eager to change the world.*



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pledge and announced his commitment to attend the Special Session on Children in September.

☐ At the launch of Say Yes in Ghana, President Kufuor promised the Children's Parliament that he would implement free, compulsory basic education and an expanded teacher-training programme.

☐ Against the backdrop of Haiti's current political and social turbulence, thousands of children and NGO representatives heard President Aristide commit himself to attend the Special Session on Children and to ensure education for all by 2004. Children spoke spontaneously and pleaded for their rights to be respected and for an end to violence against Haitian children.

☐ In Honduras, there was a launch in May and there will be a nationwide vigil organized by the various religions in the country in August. The national soccer team is showing its support by playing international matches while wearing Say Yes T-shirts.

☐ Prime Minister Patterson launched Say Yes on May 1st in a nationwide radio and television broadcast to kick off Jamaica's National Child Month. The campaign will piggyback on planned events such as market days in the country's capital in June, summer camps organized by church and community groups and NGOs in July, a national agricultural show in August and a Children's Parliament in September.

☐ Queen Rania of Jordan launched Say Yes in May and in just 21 days the campaign exceeded its target by gathering 1 million pledges.

☐ President Ratsiraka of Madagascar made a personal pledge to ensure child rights are realized in the country and to protect children from discriminatory treatment. He declared: "We continue to affirm today that the child is king!"

☐ During Mongolia's Mother and Children's Day on 1 June, the President, Prime Minister and Governor of Ulaanbaatar all urged the country's citizens to Say Yes. National pop star Ariunaa was named a UNICEF Special Envoy for Children and she released a Say Yes song that she had composed and performed with other artists on the launch day.

☐ Royal support was also forthcoming in Morocco, where Princess Lalla Meryem launched a nationwide drive on National Child Day in May.

☐ Say Yes took off in Mozambique on April 26 at a well-attended launch, marked by the participation of 150 students, the promise of governmental support from the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and the spirited performance of top female vocalist Julia Mwithu. National NGOs have distributed forms and collected more than 50,000 pledges so far. On June 1, International Children's Day, President Joaquim Chissano cast his vote before thousands gathered in Maputo.

☐ On June 1st, in a festive all-day celebration that saw the launch of five major child-rights initiatives, more than 500 children, parliamentarians, teachers and caregivers gathered as four South African Cabinet Ministers logged on to fill out South Africa's child-friendly version of the pledge, called 'Hear My Voice' <www.children.gov.za>, and to launch Say Yes on the new website of the Office on the Rights of the Child in the Presidency.

☐ Renamed 'Say Yes to Peace for

Children', the campaign is gaining momentum in Sudan where a group of artists, led by well-known actor Ali Mahdi, is preparing to take a grand 'March for Children', stopping at villages on the way to make theatre presentations and collect pledges. In southern Sudan – one of the most conflict-ridden and isolated regions in the world – paper pledge forms are being distributed and collected through schools, medical outreach and immunization programmes under the umbrellas of Operation Lifeline Sudan. Pledges are also being collected in 500 'Child Friendly Villages' in Darfur, Gedaref, Kordofan and River Nile areas.

☐ In Tanzania, President Mkapa presided over the official start of Say Yes and listened to an impassioned plea by children from 20 regions of the mainland and the island of Zanzibar for the abolition of school fees.

☐ The Makednski Posti company in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia provided prepaid postcards for distribution through daily newspapers and at schools and community centres nationwide. Top local hip-hop artist Vrcak will be campaigning for Say Yes through to September.

☐ The regional launch for Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States took place in Istanbul, Turkey, at a spectacular and colourful televised show to celebrate national Children's Day. Children from 41 countries urged the world's leaders to make the protection of children their top priority.

☐ In a regional launch, children, young people and adults from all walks of society came together on April 25th to set Say Yes in motion at the largest children's museum in Mexico City. The campaign got off to a momentous start with children voicing the 10 points of the Say Yes pledge and several notable Mexicans making the country's first set of pledges.

☐ In West Africa, 300 traditional chiefs from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal signed the Rallying Call of the Global Movement for Children. They lent their considerable moral and religious authority to an appeal for children's and women's rights and spoke out for girls' education and against early marriage.

The launch of the Say Yes campaign right across the world in 2001 has been a remarkable phenomenon: in many cases political leaders have urgently requested that they be put under as much pressure as possible by their own populations to 'deliver the goods' at the Special Session. It is up to all of us to ensure that this pressure on our leaders is sustained not just through September but in the years ahead. We can do this by making our own individual pledges, adding our own voices to the swelling international chorus that is Saying Yes for Children.

None of us is too important or too insignificant to make a pledge to this cause. As the Global Movement for Children makes clear: "We are calling on every one of you, everywhere, to do as much as you possibly can for children in your own time and in your own way."

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

One of the few Ghanaian women who has studied engineering, **Akosua Mfumuwaa** founded Akos Engineering Service, a company that makes machinery for the harvest activities usually handled by women who spend long hours supporting their families. She also trains young rural women in learning a trade and starting their own businesses.

# III

# Actions that can change the world

Unquestionably, countries with the most power in the global economy need to show leadership in the pursuit of child rights. But developing countries' disadvantage does not exempt their governments from the need to demonstrate leadership on behalf of children. The rights of children are indivisible and paramount. No society should be satisfied until the rights of all are guaranteed and respected.

Investing in children is, quite simply, the best investment a government can make. No country has made the leap into meaningful and sustained development without investing significantly in its children. According to the World Bank, one of the significant reasons, along with good macroeconomic management, that the countries of East Asia were so much more successful than those of sub-Saharan Africa in economic development during the 1970s and 1980s is that they had invested heavily in children in the preceding decades. They were reaping the harvest, in other words, of seeds sown in the 1950s and 1960s in the fertile soil of children's health, nutrition and education.[49]

*Mother and son in Tunisia*

## Voices of Young People...

# On discrimination

☐ Of the more than 100 million out-of-school youth, 60 million are girls.

☐ Between 60 million and 100 million women are 'missing' from the world's population – victims of gender-based infanticide, foeticide, malnutrition and neglect.

☐ 90 per cent of domestic workers, the largest group of child workers in the world, are girls between 12 and 17 years old.

☐ In some areas, HIV infection rates are five times higher for girls than for boys.

*"I understand that father had no choice. But why is my brother going to school while I cannot?"*

**Girl, China**

*"Indigenous children are often prevented from having their own identity and self-image – which prevents them from studying – and their land is taken away due to lack of documentation, leaving them without a house or a home."*

**Indigenous child, Costa Rica**

*"Today I work as a servant and live with a family in Arsi Negele. I cannot live with my family in the countryside. Girls who escape after being abducted are not accepted in our culture – they are hated. So instead of living with my family and being hated, I prefer to live and work with strangers and continue my education.... People in the community look at girls like me who have escaped abduction differently. They talk about what has happened to us and treat us as though we are not human beings. In my new school, people are OK because they do not know. Those who have heard, however, stay away from me."*

**Shegitu, 16, Ethiopia**

*"I feel sad about not having the opportunity to go to school . . . at least I am being offered the opportunity to learn how to sew, but how I wish I could go to school."*

**Abena, 13, Ghana**

*"Youth are definitely paid much less than older people at work. Even if their contribution is the same or more they are not considered as part of the workforce."*

**Deepti, 17, India**

*"Youth don't have equality with adults, women don't have equality with men, and disabled people don't have equality with ordinary people. And this is the problem of the whole of the world: fighting these types of discrimination. And we are fighting too. I am feeling that I am changing something in this society, so I don't feel we have discrimination in this country. Even if we have, okay. But I feel that we're going to change it. We're about to reach equality."*

**Layali, 17, Jordan**

*"As an African youth and a girl, I feel disadvantaged several times not because of my circumstances but because of the images and stories created by others and distributed about my life, my past, my dreams and even my future. When the time comes for me to play a role in the world, there is none left for me because others' prejudices, backed up by images which they have selected as 'African', have already determined a place for me without respecting my right to own my own image."*

**Alison, 17, Kenya**

*"You can't go in peace to the shops or take a walk. Maybe if I was a boy these things won't happen to us."*

**Nosie, 15, Namibia**

*"Imagine in a family where there is a boy and a girl, the girl will do all the work in the house. If there is any sacrifice to be made it will be the girl that will suffer it, for instance, when the family income is down the girl will be send to go and hawk, that is to sell things in the streets and along the highway. Most times they will push her out to an old man or introduce her into prostitution. Even our mothers are also guilty of this act. This is very wrong, people of the world should change their attitude towards girls and women."*

**Taiwo, 13, Nigeria**

In the 1990s, moreover, UNICEF studied nine developing countries and the Indian state of Kerala. All were selected for their excellent results in health and education, which far surpassed those of countries facing similar economic conditions. The aim was to find out if there was any common denominator from which other developing countries could learn. The Governments – those of Barbados, Botswana, Costa Rica, Cuba, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Kerala state – were often very different in their political orientation, but all had made a point of investing in children through strong state support for basic social services. Thus, each of these countries has consistently spent a higher proportion of their national income on primary education than their neighbours and kept primary schooling free of tuition fees.[50]

In contrast, recent studies in more than 30 countries have shown that basic social services receive, on average, between 12 per cent and 14 per cent of total public spending.[51] This is far from adequate: National governments should be aiming to spend about 20 per cent of their budgets on basic social services, a goal accepted as part of the 20/20 Initiative at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995.

Countries that do not invest enough in basic social services, that do not thereby equip their people to face the turbulence – or seize the opportunities – associated with globalization, put themselves at a serious disadvantage. Universal access to these services offers a 'social shock absorber' for travelling the bumpy road to a globalized economy, giving the people who are poor a greater chance of benefiting and making the whole process of globalization more democratic.[52]

## Strategic leadership

Decisions by political leaders have profound effects in the private lives of families, from the earliest years of a child's life through to school age; the learning years, broadly those of the primary-school-age range; and the adolescent years, when the child is grappling with the full complexity of the world.

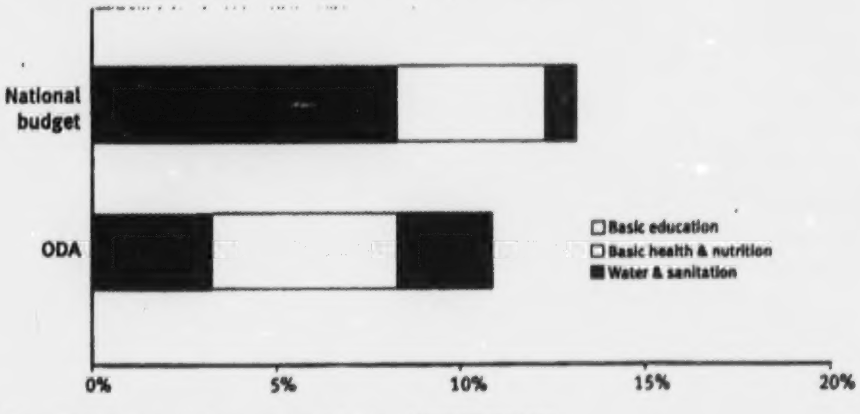
### ECD

The central importance of early childhood development (ECD) is much

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Teleza Mseche knows that AIDS is killing her country and that young people have the power to do something about it. "Young people can play a big part in this prevention by helping one another stay negative," she says. At 13, Teleza is the chairperson of her school's anti-HIV/AIDS club as well as president of the local Girl Guides chapter. She is one of three young people who have represented Malawi at international meetings in Nairobi and New York.**

**Figure 1. Under-investment in basic social services**



Source: *OECD Development Co-operation 2000 Report* and UNICEF/UNDP 1998

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PANEL

8

# Giving children the best possible start: Better parenting in Jordan

"The family is the basic social unit where the child is reared and nurtured." So states Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah as she charges early childhood development specialists in Jordan to design national strategies to upgrade the way children are cared for. "Any effort towards early childhood development should therefore be interwoven with a more embracing effort towards the well-being of the family as a whole," says the Queen, "and of women in particular."

Queen Rania's National Team for Early Childhood Development is working to identify those areas in need of increased attention – the earliest years of childhood, for example, when children first develop their abilities to think and learn, while laying the foundation for their values and behaviour as adults. The National Team will eventually submit its recommendations to the Jordanian Government for ratification. According to Queen Rania, "We in Jordan therefore prioritize our interventions to focus on equipping our citizens – not only parents and communities, but also youth who are the parents of tomorrow – with the necessary parenting and child-care knowledge and skills. Only then do we fully capitalize on the talents and potential of children, who are indeed our future, at this critical stage of their lives."

In Jordan, children are traditionally cared for at home until the age of six, in most instances by mothers, older siblings and sometimes by neighbours. Fathers generally have been absent or only slightly involved in raising their children. In 1996, as part of a long-standing commitment to support community-based services, UNICEF devised the Better Parenting Project. The project reaches parents, teachers and young future parents and assists them in developing the necessary skills to meet their children's needs most effectively. Jordan was one of the first countries to adopt the project as a pilot, with 10 committed partners on board – the Community Empowerment Project, Al-Nasir; General Union of Voluntary Societies; Jordanian Women's Union; Jordanian Hashemite Foundation for Human Development; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Youth; Noor Al-Hussein Foundation; UNICEF and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The first step was to assemble a nationwide team of trainers in Jordan, making use of existing agencies and staff in programmes in order to improve parenting skills and increase knowledge of health, nutrition and children's cognitive and social development needs. Mass media and community outreach strategies were used to reach families and to disseminate information about childcare and development. Groups of parents, including fathers, met with facilitators to discuss areas of concern and to exchange ideas. Kindergarten and nursery teachers were also invited to improve their skills.

The Better Parenting Project has achieved remarkable success – after the first three years, more than 13,000 parents were reached (12,257 women and 960 men). Parents who participated gained more confidence in their child-care skills and noted positive changes in their children's behaviour, all for the affordable cost of $3.75 per child.

In its work, the National Team for Early Childhood Development has already prioritized the following areas: passing legislation to protect children's rights; upgrading health care services for pregnant women; improving childcare at nurseries; upgrading kindergarten schooling; helping parents improve their child-care skills; ensuring that children with disabilities have the services they need; focusing on children who are homeless, beggars or orphans; broadening children's cultural horizons; using the media to communicate child-care messages; upgrading materials in schools; training all child-care workers; and upgrading the health care system.

Although much progress has been made, far too many of Jordan's poorest and most disadvantaged children have remained outside of these efforts. Government and civil service workers still need to be educated about the crucial importance of a child's earliest years. Legislation needs to be passed to protect and uphold children's rights. And more fathers need to be included in the programme, so they can better understand their children's needs and better respond to them.

For our world to survive and flourish, the first step is to give our children every chance they deserve to fulfil their potential. Jordan's strong commitment to early childhood development and its integrated approach, with the Government, nongovernmental organizations and international organizations all working together, is moving us in the right direction on the path to a better future.

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more widely accepted than was the case at the time of the World Summit for Children in 1990. High-quality care in early childhood is a prerequisite of healthy human development. It is also a fundamental human right. The world's leaders must ensure that every child, without exception, has their birth registered; that they start life safe from violence and abuse; that they have sufficient nutrition, clean water, proper sanitation and health care. And just as importantly, communities must ensure that the intellectual and emotional developmental needs of children are being met; that they are given the requisite stimulation and early learning opportunities; and that their parents and other primary caregivers receive enough support and information to provide a nurturing and enriching environment *(see Panel 8)*. If national and local governments do not deliver these things, they will be making a costly mistake – as well as failing their moral and legal obligations as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Good ECD programmes encompass all of the child-survival goals with which UNICEF is traditionally identified: maternal health, safe childbirth, regular postnatal check-ups, immunization, growth promotion through breastfeeding, complementary feeding, provision of micronutrients and parental education about nutrition and health. But they extend also into the mental, social, emotional and spiritual development of children in their early years: both the physical and psychosocial care they receive and the stimulation they enjoy.

With every passing year additional scientific evidence accumulates that a child's start in life goes a long way to determining the quality of life they will enjoy throughout childhood. There is a growth in understanding, for example, that learning starts at birth and is promoted by positive, nurturing experiences in the earliest years of childhood. In Dalmau,

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Agnes Pareyio and Leah Muuya have traversed Kenya's Rift Valley over and over since 1996, sometimes by car, sometimes on foot, for Tasaru Ntomonok or 'Safe Motherhood Initiative' to end the tradition of female genital mutilation by educating both young women and men about the dangerous side effects of the practice.**

PANEL
9

# In Malawi: Fighting HIV/AIDS from the classroom

"Avoid sex," says 12-year-old Rebecca Abraham. "Avoid boys," adds her friend. "Don't share razor blades or needles," shouts a boy at the back.

It's 10 a.m. as the class teacher, Martha Chadzamakono, asks an animated group of 10- to 12-year-olds at the Domasi Demonstration Primary School in Zomba, Malawi, "How do you avoid HIV/AIDS?" Mrs. Chadzamakono is clearly pleased with the responses. Now that the most obvious answers have been offered, only one hand remains raised. Rebecca has another answer.

"Avoid bars and bottle stores," the young girl states emphatically. There is no need to elaborate, it seems, as her classmates nod in knowing agreement about the potential consequences of hanging about in places where alcohol is likely to fuel potentially life-threatening sexual behaviour.

In twice-weekly classes like this, Malawians as young as eight years old are learning to make decisions, solve problems, negotiate with their peers and assert themselves. Ms. Chadzamakono's simple question is designed to help these youngsters acquire the knowledge and develop the positive attitudes and skills necessary to reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. The classroom has become the latest and most natural battlefield in the country's war against HIV/AIDS.

In Africa, a continent devastated by HIV/AIDS, Malawi is one of the countries worst affected. Every day an average of 267 people in the country are infected with HIV and 139 people die from AIDS-related diseases. More than 300,000 people are estimated to have died of AIDS-related illnesses since the first case in Malawi was reported in 1985 and today around 9 per cent of the 10.6 million population is believed to be infected with HIV.

Malawi's Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and the Malawi Institute of Education, with UNICEF support, have developed a life skills curriculum that is being piloted in 24 primary schools reaching about 2,400 students, evenly divided between boys and girls. Within the national strategy to stop the epidemic, the plan is to expand this life skills programme to all schools in Malawi.

Because HIV prevalence in Malawi is lowest in the 10- to 14-year age group, classes like Mrs. Chadzamakono's provide a special opportunity to affect the course of the epidemic. "These children will probably become sexually active when they are about 13 or 14," said Ms. Chadzamakono. "At their age, the focus is abstinence. When they're about 14 or 15 we'll teach them about safe sex." And she added, "Their parents are happy to know that their children are being taught the truth about HIV/AIDS."

But the skills learned in these classrooms have a broader impact than fighting the spread of the disease, however pressing the need to do that might be. Life skills education provides a foundation that allows young people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Rebecca and her friends are learning about more than how to avoid HIV/AIDS; they are learning about gender relations and about their abilities to take control of their lives.

"Of course what one has to do is to empower the women so they are able to stand on their own economically and socially," says Justin Malewezi, Malawi's Vice-President and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on HIV/AIDS.

One of Rebecca's chores after school is to fetch water from a nearby well. As she walks home with a 20-litre bucketful of water balanced on her head, she does her best to avoid eye contact with a group of local boys.

"I always go for young girls because they won't have HIV," says 18-year-old Davie, who lives about 300 metres from Rebecca's house. Davie and his mates Andrew and Anod, both 17, may look harmless, but to girls like Rebecca they spell danger. Davie's current girlfriend is only 12, the same age as Rebecca, and he says that they have sex about once a week. "I never use a condom because I trust my girlfriend," he explains matter-of-factly. "And if I trust her, then she should trust me."

While Davie's grasp of how HIV is transmitted is fairly limited, there is a cavalier logic behind his theory that he is safe from infection because younger girls are less likely to carry the virus that leads to AIDS. What doesn't seem to weigh on his mind as much is the possibility that he might pass the virus on.

Thanks to her life skills classes, Rebecca is clearer about the situation. "I'm not scared about getting AIDS because we are taught about HIV at school," she says. It is the self-confidence of her answer as much as any knowledge about HIV that offers hope for Malawi's future.

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India, for instance, ECD programmes increased school attendance by 16 per cent, while in Colombia those who had benefited from early childhood programmes were shown to be twice as likely to complete primary school.[53] What's more, investing in children at the very outset increases the likelihood of the child reaching adolescence and being able to continue learning while dealing with the challenges of work, sexuality and survival. Government funds invested early in the lives of children, especially for children at risk, can result in compensating decreases in expenditure later on for older children and adults.

If States are to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child they will have to stop seeing early childhood care as an issue of concern to families alone, as an optional extra, a soft alternative. Investing in ECD should now be second nature for the human family, as natural and inevitable to our lives as the sun and the rain on a field of rice.

## Basic education

The case for investing in basic high-quality education – particularly in the education of girls – has been well established. Education does more than produce clerks or clerics: It enhances life and expands opportunities for all. The benefits can be seen across the board. Farmers who can read and have learned something about finding and sorting information will be better able to keep pace with developments in agriculture: A study of 13 low-income countries indicated that a farmer with four years of schooling produced an average of 9 per cent more food than one who had none.[54] Education has been shown to act as a 'vaccine' against the twin dangers of hazardous child labour and HIV/AIDS[55] *(see Panel 9)*.

Girls given the opportunity to go to school, moreover, tend not just to improve their own life chances and potential but those of their future children and families – and of society as a whole *(see Panel 10)*. Girls' education has been proven to reduce child mortality, improve child health and nutrition, improve women's health, and also to reduce population growth, given that educated women tend to marry later and have fewer children. Societies that invest in educating girls and boys equally reap huge development dividends. "Investment in the education of girls," says the World Bank, "may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world."[56]

More than just an investment, education is also a fundamental right set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. What's more, UNICEF firmly believes that improving girls' education is the best and quickest way of tackling poverty and of creating more just societies. It coordinates the UN Girls' Education Initiative, launched by the UN Secretary-General at both the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 and the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The existing African Girls' Education Initiative has proved over the last five years that targeted programmes make a real difference. Among the strategies that are working: recruiting more women and training teachers to be sensitive to gender and child rights; rooting out gender bias from textbooks and educational materials; ensuring that parents and the local community are involved; increasing pre-school provision and care; ensuring that schools are located where girls can reach them safely; providing separate latrines for girls and boys; and eliminating tuition fees and other costs that deter the poor from sending their children to school *(see Panel 11)*.

The knowledge is there: After the last decade of research and experience

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

Actor and director **Rob Reiner** founded the I Am Your Child Foundation in 1997 to make early childhood development, the key years between zero and three, a priority in the United States. Since then, the Foundation has educated millions and has been influencing the Government to increase public spending on early childhood programmes.

PANEL

10

# Textbooks by donkey: Educating girls in Badakhshān

Children cluster excitedly 'round the donkeys as they arrive in this mountain village in the north-eastern province of Badakhshān in Afghanistan. This time the donkeys are carrying not supplies of food, tools or seeds – this is an area chronically short of food – but rather educational materials. These books and worksheets have been on a long journey, first purchased in Pakistan by staff of UNICEF Afghanistan. They have been sent in a convoy of trucks through the mountains into Badakhshān, on a journey made each autumn before the pass closes in the winter snows. Once in the province, the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) organizes distribution of the materials, encouraging communities to take responsibility by sending donkeys and horses to collect them from central distribution points.

Roads in Badakhshān are few and far between, and the staff from the local education department, which surveyed every village in advance of the distribution, did much of their work on horseback or on foot, sometimes taking six weeks to cover a single district.

But the remoteness of many of these mountain communities is far from being the only obstacle in the way of educating the children of the province. Afghanistan has been ravaged by conflict since 1979. Amid the widespread destruction, education has been very low on the list of priorities. Even before the war, educational opportunities in the country were extremely limited, particularly outside the major towns and cities. The rate of gross enrolment in primary school in 1978, just as the conflict began, was 37 per cent for boys and just 8 per cent for girls. Two decades on, overall enrolment figures are no better and the gender divide even worse, at 53 per cent for boys and an appalling 5 per cent for girls.

The coming to power in 1996 of the Taliban, which now controls most of the country, drastically reduced the already poor educational opportunities for Afghan girls. Formal girls' schools were closed in Taliban-held areas. In addition, women teachers were not allowed to work, an edict which also had a disastrous effect on boys' education, given the dependence of many schools on female staff. UNICEF's policy position, along with that of many other international organizations, is that the denial of girls' education contravenes the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF has therefore suspended assistance to the formal education system in Afghanistan and instead supports non-formal programmes all over the country that make an effort to include both girls and boys.

Children in Badakhshān have derived some benefit from their remoteness from the capital, Kabul. Despite its general poverty and susceptibility to earthquake damage, the province has traditionally been more committed to education than most other areas of Afghanistan. In addition, Badakhshān remains under the control of the opposition Northern Alliance, which allows girls to attend school.

This has enabled international agencies to play a part in helping the under-resourced local education department – specifically in promoting the education of girls. The provision of educational materials has been a key area of support. Another has been offering training to local teachers, who are only paid around $2 per month – well below subsistence levels. In 2000, the World Food Programme, in cooperation with UNICEF and NAC, started a food-for-education programme aimed at encouraging school attendance, with a particular emphasis on girls. In five pilot districts, both teachers and students who attend school regularly are now receiving a monthly ration of wheat, and girls are being given an extra ration of edible oil.

Programmes like these are having a quantifiable impact. While in 1993 there were 45,000 children enrolled in school, 19 per cent of whom were girls, there are now nearly 64,000 children in school, 33 per cent of whom are girls. In addition, 29 per cent of the teachers in the province are women, compared with 15 per cent in 1993.

In international terms, these are dismal figures – and UNICEF will go on working to give every child in the province, male or female, the educational opportunity that is their right. The quality of the schooling in Badakhshān, moreover, still leaves much to be desired.

But in the context of the conflict in Afghanistan, and of the comprehensive assault on girls' rights in the Taliban-controlled areas, the educational improvements in Badakhshān are encouraging. If a girls' education programme can make significant strides even here, with the bleakest conditions imaginable, it can make a difference anywhere.

it is clear what works and what does not. What is required are individuals who will fight for the funding necessary to extend the opportunities for learning to all children. The international community took a significant step forward at the World Education Forum by reaffirming the goal of Education for All while also setting new goals and higher standards – in expanded and improved care and education in early childhood, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. It also set as its year 2015 target not only universal access to primary schooling as before but also the completion of high-quality primary education by all children, including girls, ethnic minorities and those in difficult circumstances. Dakar reaffirmed the centrality of girls' education in any serious development strategy and stressed that the deadline for eliminating the gender gap in primary and secondary enrolment, unlike most of the other international development targets, has been set for 2005 rather than 2015. Four short years are left for the world to deliver equal rights for girls to learning, literacy and the empowerment of education.

## Adolescence

The third opportunity for making wise investments comes during a child's adolescence. The adolescent years are a period of very rapid development for young people in every way – physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual. This is in fact the most rapid phase of human development apart from the period just before and after birth. Yet it is also a time of great danger. It is these older children who are most vulnerable to some of the major threats to child rights – to HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation, exploitative child labour, being caught up in conflict or used as soldiers *(see Panel 12)*. Adolescents are forced to enter these arenas of risk often without the information, skills and access to support services that they need.

Adolescence is also a critical gateway to improving women's situation. The well-being of adolescent girls is pivotal in breaking down the cycles of gender discrimination that relegate far too many girls to the same disadvantaged position as their mothers. It is in these years, for example, that the gender gap in education yawns widest: While 6 per cent more boys

### *Leaders on behalf of children*

Peruvian **Agripina Rojas** is a self-trained social communicator who, through her radio programme delivered in the indigenous Quechua language, promotes the rights of children and women.

PANEL

11

# The anonymous teacher

This is the real magician.

***It can only be considered magic that a human being***

With little or no training
With little support or professional guidance
Who lives in a thatched hut, badly ventilated and scarcely illuminated
With no shops close by, and water miles away
At five or ten kilometres from school, that she or he will have to walk
Two times a day (in the morning and the afternoon)
Who receives a salary just enough to buy a week's food, how many times paid late
And that doesn't even buy clothes or furniture

***...Is able to make a child...***

Who walked five to ten kilometres to get to school
After a night sleeping on a ragged mat
In a hut with many cracks and roaming cold
Not having eaten much
After having had to complete domestic chores

***...Learn to read, write and count...***

In the shadow of a tree
Sitting on the ground
In groups of 70 children
With no chalk or didactic means
With no books or notebooks
With no pens or pencils

***It's magic, for the esoteric; a miracle, for the religious. Heroism, for the people and for each child who, from that nothing, acquires knowledge and develops skills.***

***These are the anonymous heroes of each nation. They are not heroes of war. Their only weapons are a tremendous love for children and a tenacious desire to contribute to a better world. They are the heroes of peace.***

*(From UNICEF country office Mozambique) Translated from the original Portuguese.*

than girls in developing countries enrol in primary school, the gap opens up to 16 per cent in the secondary years – and in South Asia reaches an alarming 36 per cent. It is teenage girls who are most likely to be threatened by sexual abuse, trafficking or exploitative forms of child labour *(see Panel 13)*; just as it is they who are compelled by cultural insistence or overt command towards early marriage and childbearing.

Specific provision for the needs of young people often falls by the wayside given the competing demands and priorities of adults, who can exert political pressure. But, again, governments that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child must accept that adolescents have inalienable rights that are patently ignored at present. Adolescents have the right to relevant and reliable information from a variety of sources, including parents, teachers, the media and peer educators. They have the right to be taught the life skills they need for the teenage years when they are exploring their own identity and independence – skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, critical thinking, decision-making, communication and earning a livelihood. Adolescents depend for their well-being on a safe and supportive environment that includes adults who care about them. They also have the right to participate in decisions that affect family life.

Securing and guaranteeing these rights would not only help young people, it would help human society as a whole. Adolescents make up a very large proportion of the population in developing countries, yet, as a group, they are too often ignored. They tend to be treated as a potentially delinquent, problem group instead of being valued for their energy and resourcefulness *(see Panel 14)*. We depend on young people's vibrancy and idealism for our capacity to change, to shake ourselves out of the corroded habits and patterns of cynicism that stand in the way of a better, more decent world. For that reason, among many others, young people's participation in the UN Special Session on Children in September 2001 will be vital. When adolescents' rights are fulfilled, their strength, confidence, creativity and passion can engender hope and solutions even in the most desperate situations.

## Responsibilities without borders

All countries have every economic incentive to invest in children. Each State that has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child is bound by the stipulation that national governments must implement all of the children's rights recognized in the Convention "to the maximum extent of their available resources;" and has accepted the legal and moral obligation to use the best interests of children as the mediating principle when tough economic decisions have to be made.

National and state-level finance ministers and financial institutions must accept their responsibilities for the ways in which countries use the public purse to invest in children.

The Convention does add its own rider, however, stating that "where needed," the resources should be sought "within the framework of international co-operation". Developing countries must do all they can but it is abundantly clear that most of them will fall short of the 2015 targets reaffirmed by the international community at the Millennium Summit unless there is a significant increase in external assistance – and a major infusion of the resources from debt relief.

After all, the third large obstacle blocking the road to child rights, along with conflict and HIV/AIDS, is poverty, and there is a desperate necessity for those who benefit most from the increasing prosperity of the global economy to ensure that the

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Anglican Bishop Dinis Sengulane** has called on churches in Mozambique to play an integral role in helping young soldiers, some drafted while they were children, to become members of peaceful society. His support of the Transforming Guns into Hoes programme has led many to exchange weapons – both real and play – for farm tools.

PANEL

12

# The involvement of children in armed conflict: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

*On 25 May 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. To date, 80 States have signed it and four have ratified it. Ten ratifications are needed to bring it into force.*

## *The States Parties to the present Protocol,*

*Encouraged* by the overwhelming support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, demonstrating the widespread commitment that exists to strive for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child,

*Reaffirming* that the rights of children require special protection, and calling for continuous improvement of the situation of children without distinction, as well as for their development and education in conditions of peace and security,

*Disturbed* by the harmful and widespread impact of armed conflict on children and the long-term consequences it has for durable peace, security and development,

*Condemning* the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict and direct attacks on objects protected under international law, including places that generally have a significant presence of children, such as schools and hospitals,

*Noting* the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in particular, the inclusion therein as a war crime, of conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years or using them to participate actively in hostilities in both international and non-international armed conflicts,

*Considering* therefore that to strengthen further the implementation of rights recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child there is a need to increase the protection of children from involvement in armed conflict,

*Noting* that article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies that, for the purposes of that Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier,

*Convinced* that an optional protocol to the Convention that raises the age of possible recruitment of persons into armed forces and their participation in hostilities will contribute effectively to the implementation of the principle that the best interests of the child are to be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children,

*Noting* that the twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 1995 recommended, *inter alia*, that parties to conflict take every feasible step to ensure that children below the age of 18 years do not take part in hostilities,

*Welcoming* the unanimous adoption, in June 1999, of International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which prohibits, *inter alia*, forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict,

*Condemning with the gravest concern* the recruitment, training and use within and across national borders of children in hostilities by armed groups distinct from the armed forces of a State, and recognizing the responsibility of those who recruit, train and use children in this regard,

*Recalling* the obligation of each party to an armed conflict to abide by the provisions of international humanitarian law,

*Stressing* that the present Protocol is without prejudice to the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 51, and relevant norms of humanitarian law,

*Bearing in mind* that conditions of peace and security based on full respect of the purposes and principles contained in the Charter and observance of applicable human rights instruments are indispensable for the full protection of children, in particular during armed conflicts and foreign occupation,

*Recognizing* the special needs of those children who are particularly vulnerable to recruitment or use in hostilities contrary to the present Protocol owing to their economic or social status or gender,

*Mindful* of the necessity of taking into consideration the economic, social and political root causes of the involvement of children in armed conflicts,

*Convinced* of the need to strengthen international cooperation in the implementation of the present Protocol, as well as the physical and psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration of children who are victims of armed conflict,

*Encouraging* the participation of the community and, in particular, children and child victims in the dissemination of informational and educational programmes concerning the implementation of the Protocol,

## *Have agreed as follows:*

### Article 1

States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

### Article 2

States Parties shall ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces.

—*Excerpted from "Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography," A/RES/54/263, 26 June 2000.*

most vulnerable – inevitably women and children in the poorest countries – also benefit. The fact is that, while there has been an overall increase in wealth, this is heavily concentrated in just a few countries. The gulf between the richest and the poorest countries on earth is actually widening with every passing day. In 1990 the annual income per person in industrialized countries was 60 times greater than that in the least developed countries; in 1999 it was almost 100 times greater.

In the last five years the international community has become increasingly concerned about reducing poverty – and with good reason. For the last decade-and-a-half, countries all around the world have been broadly following the economic policies of what has come to be known as the Washington Consensus because of its support by the United States Treasury and Washington-based institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These policies have involved the pursuit of low inflation through fiscal discipline, trade and financial liberalization and widespread privatization. The emphasis rightly has been on efficiency and wrongly not on equity: The underlying assumption has been that the policies would result in economic growth that would benefit the poor.

The problem is that the poor have been conspicuously the last to benefit from the advantages of economic reform and globalization. In Latin America, for example, where most countries, whether out of choice or necessity, abided by the Washington Consensus with remarkable unanimity and single-mindedness in the 1990s, the new economic policies had minimal impact on income poverty. There were certainly overall benefits: single-digit inflation, a lower debt burden and an influx of private capital into the region. But, unemployment rose while nearly 80 million people remained in extreme poverty and the region retained the most unequal distribution of income and assets in the world.[57]

The deficiencies in the Washington Consensus are being increasingly recognized, not least by the World Bank itself.[58] The poor have to be protected from the earth tremors of globalization by public investment in basic social services. If globalization is inevitable, and if it is to be a liberating rather than a damaging force, the universal package of minimum standards that it includes should not entail simply the removal of tariff barriers but also the guarantee of children's rights.

Thankfully, there are at last signs that at least some of the richest nations are beginning to take their responsibility to combat global poverty seriously. There was a long campaign throughout the 1980s and 1990s by non-governmental organizations, religious groups and international organizations – including UNICEF in its yearly *The State of the World's Children* reports – aimed at persuading the most powerful nations and international financial institutions to move more swiftly and surely to tackle the massive problem of indebtedness. The work of the Jubilee 2000 coalition, in particular, has been nothing short of heroic in transforming the issue of debt relief from a 'fringe concern' into a practical, serious proposition.

Now the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which was painfully slow and circumscribed at first, is finally starting to kick in. Debt relief has been late in coming. After many years in which Western governments and the international financial institutions held out against any kind of relief 'on principle', critics wondered if the HIPC Initiative was simply a smokescreen disguising a fundamental unwillingness to tackle the debt problem. By early 2000 HIPC had still only provided debt relief to four countries: Bolivia, Guyana, Mozambique and Uganda.[59] Now, the 'enhanced' version of HIPC

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Visiting women in the streets where they work, Solidarity with Women in Distress, or SOLWODI, provides guidance and counselling on HIV/AIDS and STIs for commercial sex workers in Mombasa and Malindi, many of whom were adolescents when they entered Kenya's thriving commercial sex trade. The NGO also helps with vocational training and psychosocial life skills.**

PANEL

13

# The sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

*On 25 May 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. To date, 73 States have signed it and four have ratified it. Ten ratifications are needed in order to bring it into force.*

## *The States Parties to the present Protocol,*

*Considering that,* in order further to achieve the purposes of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the implementation of its provisions, especially articles 1, 11, 21, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36, it would be appropriate to extend the measures that States Parties should undertake in order to guarantee the protection of the child from the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,

*Considering also* that the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development,

*Gravely concerned* at the significant and increasing international traffic in children for the purpose of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,

*Deeply concerned* at the widespread and continuing practice of sex tourism, to which children are especially vulnerable, as it directly promotes the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,

*Recognizing* that a number of particularly vulnerable groups, including girl children, are at greater risk of sexual exploitation and that girl children are disproportionately represented among the sexually exploited,

*Concerned* about the growing availability of child pornography on the Internet and other evolving technologies, and recalling the International Conference on Combating Child Pornography on the Internet, held in Vienna in 1999, in particular its conclusion calling for the worldwide criminalization of the production, distribution, exportation, transmission, importation, intentional possession and advertising of child pornography, and stressing the importance of closer cooperation and partnership between Governments and the Internet industry,

*Believing* that the elimination of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography will be facilitated by adopting a holistic approach, addressing the contributing factors, including underdevelopment, poverty, economic disparities, inequitable socio-economic structure, dysfunctioning families, lack of education, urban-rural migration, gender discrimination, irresponsible adult sexual behaviour, harmful traditional practices, armed conflicts and trafficking in children,

*Believing* also that efforts to raise public awareness are needed to reduce consumer demand for the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and believing further in the importance of strengthening global partnership among all actors and of improving law enforcement at the national level,

*Noting* the provisions of international legal instruments relevant to the protection of children, including the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, the Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, and International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour,

*Encouraged* by the overwhelming support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, demonstrating the widespread commitment that exists for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child,

*Recognizing* the importance of the implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Declaration and Agenda for Action adopted at the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996, and the other relevant decisions and recommendations of pertinent international bodies,

*Taking due account* of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,

## *Have agreed as follows:*

### Article 1

States Parties shall prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography as provided for by the present Protocol.

### Article 2

For the purposes of the present Protocol:

(a) Sale of children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration;

(b) Child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration;

(c) Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.

—*Excerpted from "Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography," A/RES/54/263, 26 June 2000.*

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has at last begun to make a difference. Some 22 poor countries receive varying amounts of relief that should eventually amount to around $34 billion and should help reduce their debt to one third of what it was at the start of the process.[40]

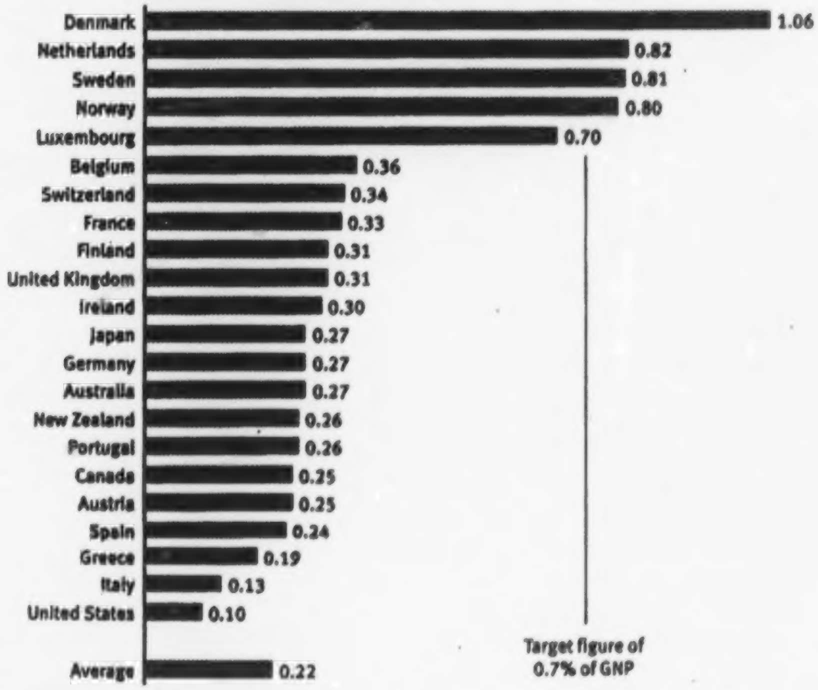
Another extremely welcome development has been the announcement by the G7 countries that they will forgive 100 per cent of the bilateral debt owed them by HIPC-qualified countries. The Government of the United Kingdom has shown particular leadership on the international stage in this respect – and its decision, supported by the Canadian Government, to place any current debt-service payments from conflict-ridden countries in trust for when they attain peace is far-sighted. The UK has also taken a lead in abolishing the iniquitous practice of tying aid to the purchase of goods from the donor country's own companies – and is now campaigning for other industrialized countries to follow suit.

The UK Government has also undertaken to increase its spending on overseas aid from 0.24 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) in 1999 to 0.31 per cent over the next two years, after many years of dwindling or stagnating aid. The increase is welcome as a first instalment but in this respect the leaders have long been the countries of northern Europe – Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – who have consistently met or exceeded the UN recommended minimum of 0.7 per cent of GNP. As it stands, bilateral aid flows from the industrialized countries are $100 billion a year less than governments have agreed they should be. As long as aid levels are so low, rich countries are reneging on their side of the bargain. Agreed targets are agreed tar-

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**The Reverend Leon Sullivan, who died in April 2001 at 78, let nothing stand in his way in his pursuit of rights, even if it came to "moving mountains that stand in the way of freedom, justice, and truth." He devised the 'Sullivan Principles', guidelines for American corporations investing in South Africa, and also designed the 'Global Sullivan Principles' to address company standards in the era of globalization.**

**Figure 2. Official development assistance as a percentage of donor nation GNP, 2000**



**Source:** OECD, Press release, 20 April 2001

PANEL

14

# Chronicle of a disaster foretold

"It was like seeing dead men walking...," says Rosemberg Marín as he recalls the people going through the rubble in his native Cojutepeque, a community one hour east of San Salvador, the capital city of El Salvador. "There was practically nothing left from the houses," he says, "...but the most painful thing was to see children who had lost not only that, but also somebody or everyone in their family."

In January and February 2001, two major earthquakes and thousands of aftershocks jolted this country already suffering the socio-economic consequences of years of war, poverty, environmental degradation and overpopulation. El Salvador now had to deal with a natural disaster that buried entire villages, killed or wounded thousands and left almost one quarter of the population homeless. Damage to social structures, health and education infrastructures, the productive sectors and the environment amounts to 12 per cent of the country's 2000 gross domestic product. Reconstruction costs are calculated at over $1.9 billion.

These earthquakes were the latest in a series of natural disasters increasing in frequency and severity, aggravating the ecological vulnerability of El Salvador. In the last three years alone, El Niño, Hurricane Mitch and La Niña pummelled the country, each compounding the impact of the previous event.

At age 18, Rosemberg, whose family home was almost completely destroyed in the quake, is somewhat of an expert in disaster mitigation. He has been volunteering with the Defensorías de los Derechos de la Niñez y Adolescencia (Defenders of Children's and Adolescents' Rights), a UNICEF-supported initiative set up since the time of Hurricane Mitch in 1998. The Defensorías train young volunteers in psychosocial rehabilitation and prepare them to work with traumatized children and adults. This is how 19-year-old Mirna Bulnes from San Salvador got involved, becoming a volunteer shortly before the hurricane raged through the country.

Central American geological structures are prone to seismic movements, hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods and droughts. But there are also important man-made factors that aggravate the impact of these disasters. Land cleared by indiscriminate deforestation loses stability and fertility within a very few years. Steep hillsides quickly become eroded without investments in soil conservation. Intense population density, as is the case in El Salvador, often provokes rapid, unplanned growth of human settlement in vulnerable areas and leaves inhabitants unprotected.

Primarily, it is the poor who live in these environmentally marginal and vulnerable areas, on land that no one else wants, far removed from services or employment, in isolated rural areas, or on steep hillsides. The mutually reinforcing relationships between poverty and population growth and environmental stress constitute a vicious circle through which poverty helps maintain high rates of population growth and increase environmental stress, both of which contribute in turn to the perpetuation of poverty. This interaction of poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration is actually one problem.

This year's earthquakes in El Salvador were to a large extent a disaster foretold. Warnings that these problems had accumulated to the point at which disaster was inevitable had abounded for years. Numerous studies, books and assessments pointed to the need for a national strategy for disaster prevention and adequate laws and institutions to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development.

"Our country needs a strategic disaster-prevention plan that focuses on risk mitigation in areas of high vulnerability," says Mirna. And she wants young people involved: "We young people want to get involved and participate actively in all the actions aimed at preventing this type of disaster so that we can achieve political and social awareness in my country." Rosemberg sees a solution in disaster-prevention education for young people. "It would give us a certain degree of hope that these youth or children would have the capacity to organize their community." He wants a strong Ministry of the Environment, and the Government to focus its public policies around social, economic and ecological issues.

Do Mirna and Rosemberg think that their country can be rebuilt? "Not only do I trust that my country can be reconstructed," says Mirna, "but I am also confident that everybody will contribute to this change, and that we will all live one day in a country with better opportunities for social and economic progress." Rosemberg thinks that "if we all unite as Salvadorans, without expecting financial rewards for helping others, we can defeat anything."

gets; and if they are so conspicuously ignored by the world's most powerful economies, how can those governments in all conscience preach to their counterparts in developing countries who have infinitely fewer resources to work with?

Nations that claim leadership of the global economy must set behind them the broken promises of the last century. They must respond to the call by the Managing Director of the IMF, Horst Köhler, for "a campaign to mobilize public support for action by all OECD governments and parliaments to reach the 0.7 per cent target within this decade."[61] That public support will not be difficult to enlist: A recent poll in the United States found that respondents believed their government to be spending well over 20 per cent of the federal budget on foreign aid. When asked what they considered to be an appropriate level of foreign aid, the answer averaged out at 14 per cent of the budget. The actual proportion of the US budget that goes to aid is 0.3 per cent.[62] In Spain, meanwhile, some municipalities have shown leadership on this issue by agreeing to devote 0.7 per cent of their budgets to assisting municipalities in developing countries.

An encouraging event took place in London in February 2001. The UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown and International Development Secretary Clare Short convened a one-day conference on International Action against Child Poverty. It marked a notable change of emphasis. Taking seriously the call of the Global Movement for Children for everyone, whatever position they hold in society, to do all they can to deliver children's rights, Gordon Brown brought his influence as finance minister in one of the world's richest economies to bear. Finance ministers from many parts of the world were invited, along with the heads of the World Bank, IMF and delegations from key UN agencies and NGOs – all of them put on the spot as to what they could contribute. It was a recognition that the development goals that the international community has undertaken to meet by the year 2015 have no chance of being met unless all parties work together with markedly more commitment than has been shown hitherto – and most particularly unless the finance ministers and international financial institutions who control the resources are on board.

"What can be achieved together by unity of purpose is far greater than what we can ever achieve acting on our own," says Gordon Brown. "It is by putting the needs of the young and the poor not only at the centre of social policy but at the centre of financial decision-making, economic policy and international diplomatic action, that we can ensure a better future – a future of health and hope – in which no child is left behind and every child, in every country, has the opportunity to make the very most of his or her abilities."[63]

Speaking by satellite link at the same event, Nelson Mandela challenged those in the audience, "We must move children to the centre of the world's agenda. We must rewrite strategies to reduce poverty so that investments in children are given priority."

Among the initiatives launched at the conference was a proposal from the Italian Government, using its leadership position chairing the G7 countries, to create a special Trust Fund for Health to which the 1,000 largest corporations in the world would contribute a minimum donation of $500,000 each. The governments of industrialized nations would then match those donations to arrive at a fund of at least a billion dollars that could be dedicated to helping countries to meet the year 2015 goals on health.[64]

This is exactly the kind of partnership between rich countries and poor, governments and corporations, UN

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Under the multi-lane bridges spanning Jakarta's bustling intersections, Sri Irianingsih and Sri Rosiati, twin sisters known as Rian and Rosi, have jerry-rigged cardboard cartons, soapboxes and jute mats to create health centres and schools that serve hundreds of the city's street children. They spend US $2,000 monthly, mostly from their own pockets.**

PANEL

15

# In East Timor: Leadership to build an independent nation

In a small shop near the market in Maliana, Agusta and Victoria da Silva serve customers from behind a rough wooden benchtop. Next door, Dulce Maria sits at a foot-pedalled sewing machine making a T-shirt. These three women help run the Nove Nove Cooperacion shop, selling hand-made items such as clothes and baskets, along with manufactured items, most of them imported from Indonesia.

The women are all members of the self-help group Nove Nove (Nine Nine). Altogether, the 48 members of Nove Nove have more than 200 children, but not a single husband. The men were all killed in September 1999, at the height of the violence that swept East Timor after the 30 August vote for independence from Indonesia.

The impact of those riotous weeks was both immediate and long-lasting. Government services ceased to function practically overnight as buildings associated with the administration were looted and razed to the ground and the staff who worked in the administration left en masse. Schools were destroyed, village health posts burned to their foundations and around two thirds of the population was displaced. Most of the vehicles, fishing boats and personal belongings disappeared, as did several thousand people.

Today, many agencies are working together to train the people who will run East Timor when it achieves full independence. The current vacuum of policies and structures is both a threat to the rights of children and an opportunity to put issues that affect children and young people on the national agenda.

Regina Leite lives with six of her children in a large house on a hillside overlooking the town centre of Maliana. She has two more children in Dili and one in Australia on a scholarship. Her husband was the local leader of the CNRT, the umbrella body for the East Timorese independence movement. The name Nove Nove refers to the date of his murder – 9 September, 1999. Regina is currently ill with a relapse of malaria, but still willing to talk to strangers.

"I decided to form Nove Nove because I realized there were many women in the same situation as me. I also realized that it helps to talk about what happened with other people who had the same experience," she says. The women in Nove Nove started by getting together to discuss their everyday needs: how to collect water, feed their children and send them to school, how to rebuild the houses that were burned in the violence. "We would talk together, cry together. It helped us to feel better to know we weren't alone. Sometimes, if one woman cries, her friends will joke with her to cheer her up. We know when we can joke and when we need to cry."

Although talking helped, the women soon realized that it would neither solve their problems nor help in their struggle to feed and clothe their children. At this point, Mrs. Leite attended a leadership training course run by UNICEF in Maliana. During the three-day programme, she and 34 other women learned how to run an organization, including how to draw up a workplan, set objectives and come to decisions in a group. She also travelled to Dili, where FOKUPERS, the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum, also supported by UNICEF, held a workshop on how to manage cooperative enterprises.

"The training we had from UNICEF was good for us, not only in the business but also at home. We all have children to bring up and households to organize, so time management, for instance, is very useful. However, we need more skills and we need to be able to reach out to other women."

While Nove Nove is a success and an inspiration, formidable challenges remain for East Timor. Every area of social welfare, especially those related to children, lacks resources. The student: teacher ratio is above 60 to 1 in primary schools and most health services are currently being provided by NGOs. UNICEF has trained teachers in participatory methods and is working with what will become the education department to develop a training programme for the mostly inexperienced school principals. Because the current situation has pushed young people and women into leadership roles for which they were not prepared, UNICEF and others run leadership courses for women's and youth groups, training hundreds of people in how to set up and run organizations.

Through literacy classes, thousands of women in remote districts like Bobonaro and the Ambeno enclave are learning to read and write. Mrs. Leite also finds time to help lead one of these literacy groups, although it hasn't been easy. "They [her children] are all studying, so it has been a very heavy load for me to carry. I have to force myself every day, but I want them to go to school so I have to be strong for them."

agencies and NGOs that was lacking in the last decades of the 20th century – and which the Global Movement for Children seeks to inspire and promote at the start of the 21st. It is up to all of us, from teachers to government ministers, volunteers to corporate chief executives, social workers to bankers, to make our own contribution to that movement. The face of global poverty must no longer be the face of a young child.

## The Special Session on Children

The UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children in September 2001 is the culmination of years of work by literally thousands of organizations. The ground has been prepared for it, as with any major UN conference, by a series of preparatory gatherings at which key issues have been debated and explored, and guiding principles and targets for future actions have been adopted. The issue of accountability has gained new prominence, in particular as it relates to commitments to children in the coming years.

Unlike any other UN conference, the widest possible range of civil society organizations working with and for children has played an active part in the debate from the start. Representatives of NGOs have had broad access and contributed significantly to the process and the draft documents. Organizations both small and large from all over the world have risen above their differences to support a common agenda. They have created a multi-pronged alliance aimed at ensuring that the world takes seriously the idea that children have fundamental human rights, that they must have the first call on our energy, commitment and resources.

It is an alliance, moreover, which does not just aim to represent children's needs and concerns but to be founded on their participation. Children's right to participate is nowhere more appropriate than at the Special Session and the major meetings leading up to it. So it was that in Jomtien, Thailand, in April, there was an unprecedented gathering of children aged between 11 and 18 from countries all over East Asia. They met to discuss the problems of children in the region, to formulate their vision of how things should be and to make their own recommendations to the governments and NGOs who will be

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Ms. Tho, a social worker at the Rose Warm Shelter for sexually abused girls in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, has devoted her life to helping child victims of sexual abuse and trafficking recover from their trauma and lead productive lives.**

present at the Special Session. In the same month, children from 27 countries across Europe and Central Asia met in Budapest to work on a Young People's Agenda for Europe and Central Asia. There was a similar Regional Youth Forum in Amman in November 2000 involving children from the Middle East and North Africa: They stressed that children must be included in all efforts to end the inequality, violence and injustice that undermine children's rights and human development. In April 2001 in Kathmandu, a group called The Change Makers, representing children from the eight countries of South Asia, presented their own vision of the future to corporate leaders from the region. "We want a world," they said, "where there is no discrimination between boys and girls, between the able and the disabled, between the rich and the poor. We want a healthy, safe and clean environment suitable for all. And we want a decent education and opportunities for play, instead of having to work."

## A world fit for children

The Special Session will be a unique opportunity for the world's nations to make a clean break with the tradition of leaving hundreds of millions of children abandoned in poverty or exploited in labour, condemned to everyday hunger or denied the benefits of learning. Those present at the Special Session will have the chance to be part of an historic moment in which the world's leaders commit themselves to creating a world fit for children within a generation.

The work has already begun on a regional basis. At the 10th Ibero-American Summit in Panama in December 2000, 21 Presidents and Heads of State signed a Declaration pledging to deliver free and compulsory education for all children by 2015, to halve maternal mortality by 2010 and to crack down on the trafficking, kidnapping and sexual exploitation of children. Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso will take to the Special Session a proposal for a more integrated system for monitoring the way governments' commitments to children's rights are being implemented.

In Lebanon in April 2001, a regional symposium met to draw up a plan of action called An Arab World Fit for Children. This was followed by a conference of Arab and African finance ministers in Morocco in May, which recommended formal assessments of the impact of government policies on children; it also proposed the creation of national committees that would press for child-focused budgets. In China in May 2001, governments from across East Asia and the Pacific undertook to put children's well-being at the top of their agenda, accepting that it represented "the most important indicator of national and economic social progress." The fifth such regional meeting to review progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children, this was the first that had featured the active participation of children and adolescents. In Nepal, meanwhile, finance ministers from South Asia met in that same month to discuss the urgent need to increase investment in children – and came to a consensus on how to do it. They agreed that governments needed to forge new alliances with the private sector, with civil society organizations and with children themselves in order to generate the necessary resources. In Berlin, too, there was a regional meeting for Europe and Central Asia that produced a 20-point action plan. "If we are to create a better world and better future for our children," Zlatko Lagumdžija, Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, told delegates, "we must put children and child rights at the top of our political agenda."

We have learned a great deal over the decades of development about the way in which promises are discarded or evaded – always leaving children to bear the brunt of the betrayal. We have learned that targets and goals have to be specific, time-bound and measurable – and that progress towards them has to be carefully monitored and reviewed. Delegates to the Special Session will therefore be asked to commit to concrete targets in child health, in education, in combating HIV/AIDS and in protecting children from abuse, exploitation or violence. More than that, though, they will be asked to agree to account for their progress or their failure.

To make the achievement of the goals possible, delegates will be asked for a commitment to mobilize the resources of which the world's children have been starved. We encourage government leaders in developing and industrialized countries to work closely together to meet the following targets:

☐ All countries who have not done so should strive to meet the long-agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for overall development assistance;

☐ Full financing in order to speed up debt relief, particularly in least developed countries, and cancellation of all official bilateral debts;

☐ Easier access to exports for the least developed countries, free from duty or quota restrictions;

☐ Social spending over military expenditure;

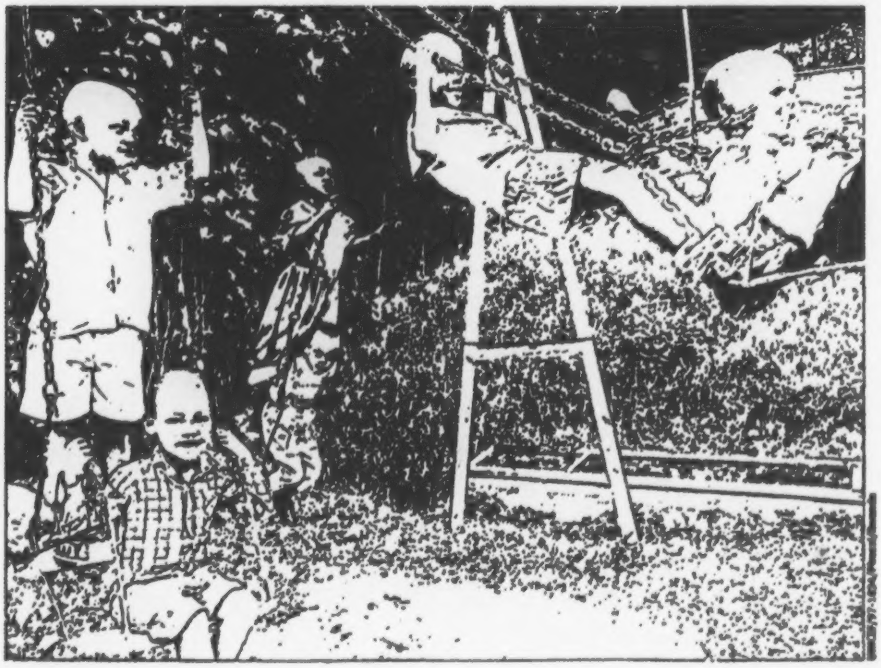
☐ Domestic resources should be used for social development and to reduce disparities at the international and national levels;

☐ Both aid and government expenditures should be restructured along the lines of the 20/20 Initiative, in line with the Oslo and Hanoi Consensus documents, to achieve universal access to basic social services.

At the Special Session governments must show they have finally understood that, for the good of all, the rights of children must come first.

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**Lescek Zawadka**, a Polish musician who lives in Mexico, founded Niños Cantores de Valle de Chalco, a children's choir, considered the best in the country, in one of the 10 poorest municipalities in the state of Mexico. The choir regularly gives concerts and has toured Europe and Latin America.



# Voices of Young People...

## On poverty and education

- ☐ **Children are the hardest hit by poverty: it causes lifelong damage to their minds and bodies.**
- ☐ **More than half a billion children live on less than $1 a day.**
- ☐ **Education is the key to ending poverty.**
- ☐ **More than 100 million children are out of school because of poverty, discrimination or lack of resources.**

*"For six years, my school has been a railroad car. It is difficult to learn. There is not glass in the windows. During the summer it's impossible to stay cool and during winter it's impossible to stay warm.... I don't have any gloves, so it's terrible to write. After one or two lessons in the cold, the teachers usually let us leave."*

**Isa, 17, Azerbaijan**

*"[And] when you see hope, your sense of humour returns. You can even tease your parents."*

**Xiuhua, 15, on getting a job, China**

*"My name is Eilyn. I quit school at 13 years because of economical problems. At 15, I tried come back, but I wasn't accepted anymore."*

**Eilyn, 15, Costa Rica**

*"I am always frightened at night. Drunk men come to bother me all the time. One day, I tried to run away with my siblings. But, we had nowhere to go, nothing to eat, and nowhere to sleep. So we came back. Now it is even worse. There aren't many like me; most families have one parent; we are always poor; we never eat or drink well when others do."*

**Zewdi, 14, Eritrea**

*"How can I continue education without having enough to eat?"*

**Street vendor, 12, Ethiopia**

*"There are some of us who are very privileged who will get good education and good exposure. And some who do take advantage of opportunities given to them. However, there are some who don't take advantage or are deprived of opportunities, say by going into child labour. Child labour is more profitable in the eyes of their parents, because they will be making money for the family instead of studying. Studying would be an investment for families, which would not be affordable in many cases."*

**Deepti, 17, India**

*"Before being released by Bachpan Bachao Andolan, I worked in the stone quarries of Faridabad in North India. Here I was beaten regularly on one pretext or the other. The loan, which my father had taken, never seemed to be repaid. Year after year I worked until one day Bachpan Bachao Andolan stepped in! Today I understand how important it is to be educated. No one will now be able to make me or my family sign on blank sheets of paper and make us bonded slaves."*

**Kaushalya, 14, India**

*"We don't like this work because it is hard and we feel very tired when picking tea, but we know how to pick tea because it helps us in many ways. It helps us to get food, money for paying school fees and also clothes and other things, and also we want to stop it."*

**Betty, 13, Kenya**

*"Even if I could enrol in standard one for free, there would be no money for supplies."*

**Piana, 13, Lesotho**

*"I live in roofless and damaged former government building with my fourteen-year-old sister, and my three children – one son and two girls (twins). The oldest is my four-year son and the twins are one and a half years old. When I go begging, I take my children with me. My sister also goes begging. We eat together what we get."*

**Refugee girl, 16, Somalia**

*"I married young (at 14) and am uneducated. But I will not allow my daughter to marry young and be uneducated. I will giver her the chance to be educated and let her get her own income prior to getting married. The civil war forced me to marry young. I will protect the mistakes of early marriage and lack of education from my daughter."*

**Militia girl, 20, Somalia**

As Nelson Mandela has said: "Any country, any society, which does not care for its children is no nation at all." Heads of State and Government, ministers and civil servants, experts and activists who will gather in New York carry with them an accountability to all those who are a part of the Global Movement for Children. Every individual who has said 'Yes' for children, whether in the mountains of Afghanistan or the jungles of Peru, the cities of Germany or the townships of South Africa, has pledged in support of a 10-point plan to change the world – a plan that will continue to play out in daily lives long after the Special Session ends.

Now it is the turn of those who hold political power and the public trust – those with the greatest opportunity and the greatest responsibility – to bring about change. The millions of people in every country of the world who have pledged their support to the cause of children's rights will be watching more closely than they have ever watched before. Those who would call themselves leaders must give all that is needed – no less will do – to create a world fit for children.

## Birthright and promise

The idea of birthright is an ancient one that occurs in all cultures and religions. With our feet still fresh on the sand of the new century, let us make a sacred promise to deliver to the children who will be born into our world the health and nutrition, the education and protection, that is their birthright.

We know far more than we have ever known before about how to make this happen. As a global community, we have more resources than we have ever had before that can be put to work to bring it about.

It is already late for Ayodele and other children of the 1990s, for all those who were born around the time of the World Summit for Children. But the decisions made in September 2001 and the action taken in the years ahead could change the fate of the next generation.

In our hands rests the opportunity to consign neglect, abuse and exploitation of children to the history books and to write our own new page. If we squander this new opportunity, our children will judge us harshly and we will have again betrayed a most sacred trust. The promises we make now are the promises we must keep.

This time there is no excuse. The task is set and the road is clear. Let's go to work.

## *Leaders on behalf of children*

**When Princess Lalla Fatima Zohra of Morocco spoke publicly about AIDS earlier this year, she broke one of her country's taboos. The number of AIDS cases in Morocco quadrupled last year to 20,000 and the region is on the verge of an epidemic. Princess Lalla Fatima is ensuring that silence and denial won't be another factor in the spread of the virus.**

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# Maps

*Pictorial representations of findings from end-decade reviews in more than 130 countries that assessed the implementation of the 1990 World Summit for Children goals. The selected indices capture both gains and future challenges for the well-being of children.*

## Maps

1. PROGRESS SINCE THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN ............ *PAGE 78*

2. PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVES AND QUALITY EDUCATION ............ *PAGE 80*

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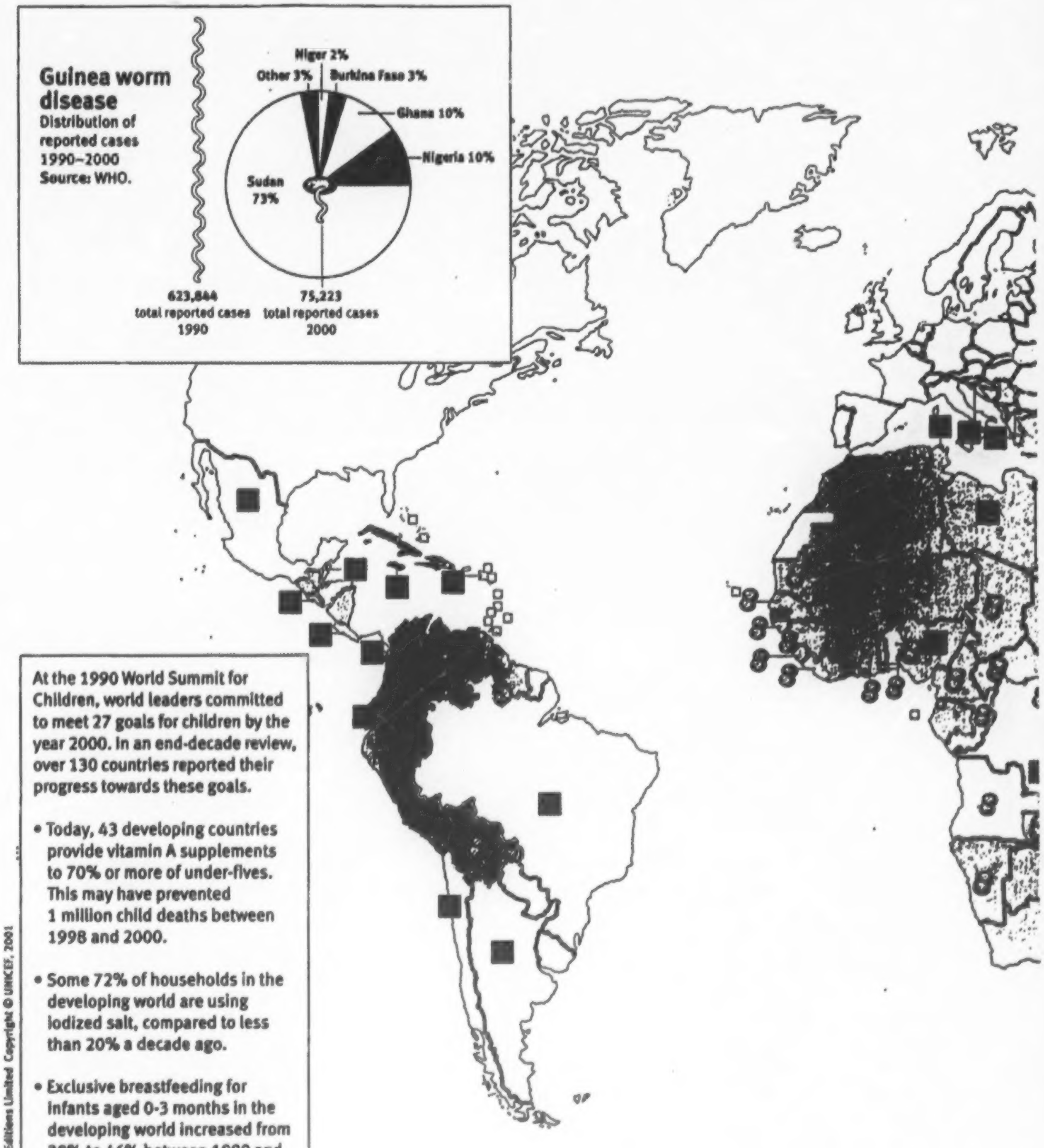
GENERAL NOTES ON MAPS ............ *PAGE 84*



## Guinea worm disease

Distribution of reported cases 1990–2000
Source: WHO.

Niger 2%
Other 3%
Burkina Faso 3%
Ghana 10%
Nigeria 10%
Sudan 73%
623,844 total reported cases 1990
75,223 total reported cases 2000

At the 1990 World Summit for Children, world leaders committed to meet 27 goals for children by the year 2000. In an end-decade review, over 130 countries reported their progress towards these goals.

- Today, 43 developing countries provide vitamin A supplements to 70% or more of under-fives. This may have prevented 1 million child deaths between 1998 and 2000.
- Some 72% of households in the developing world are using iodized salt, compared to less than 20% a decade ago.
- Exclusive breastfeeding for infants aged 0-3 months in the developing world increased from 39% to 46% between 1989 and 1999.
- Guinea worm disease is now eliminated except in one country in the Middle East and parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

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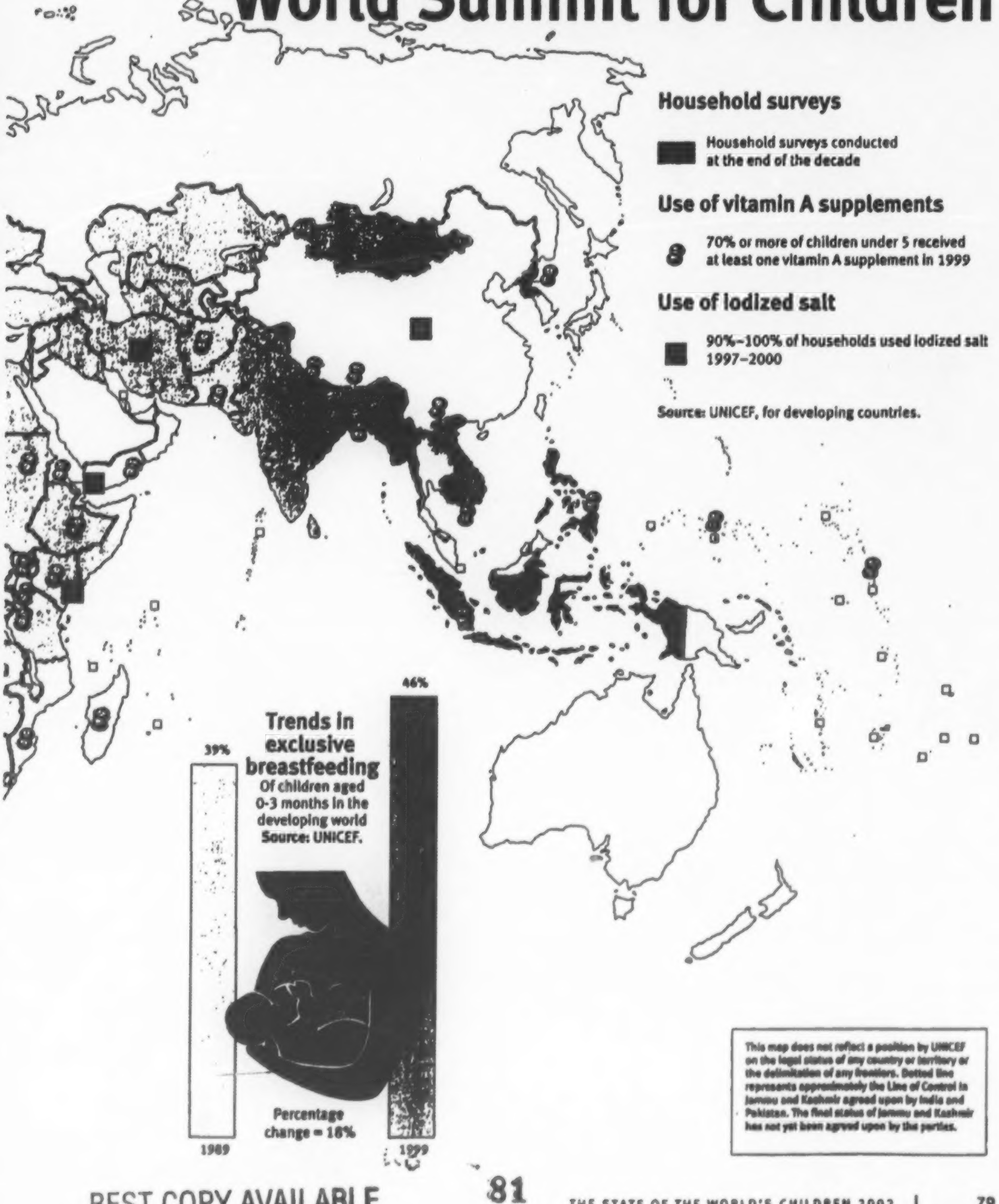
# Progress since the World Summit for Children



### Household surveys

▨ Household surveys conducted at the end of the decade

### Use of vitamin A supplements

● 70% or more of children under 5 received at least one vitamin A supplement in 1999

### Use of iodized salt

■ 90%–100% of households used iodized salt 1997–2000

Source: UNICEF, for developing countries.

**Trends in exclusive breastfeeding**

Of children aged 0-3 months in the developing world

Source: UNICEF.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

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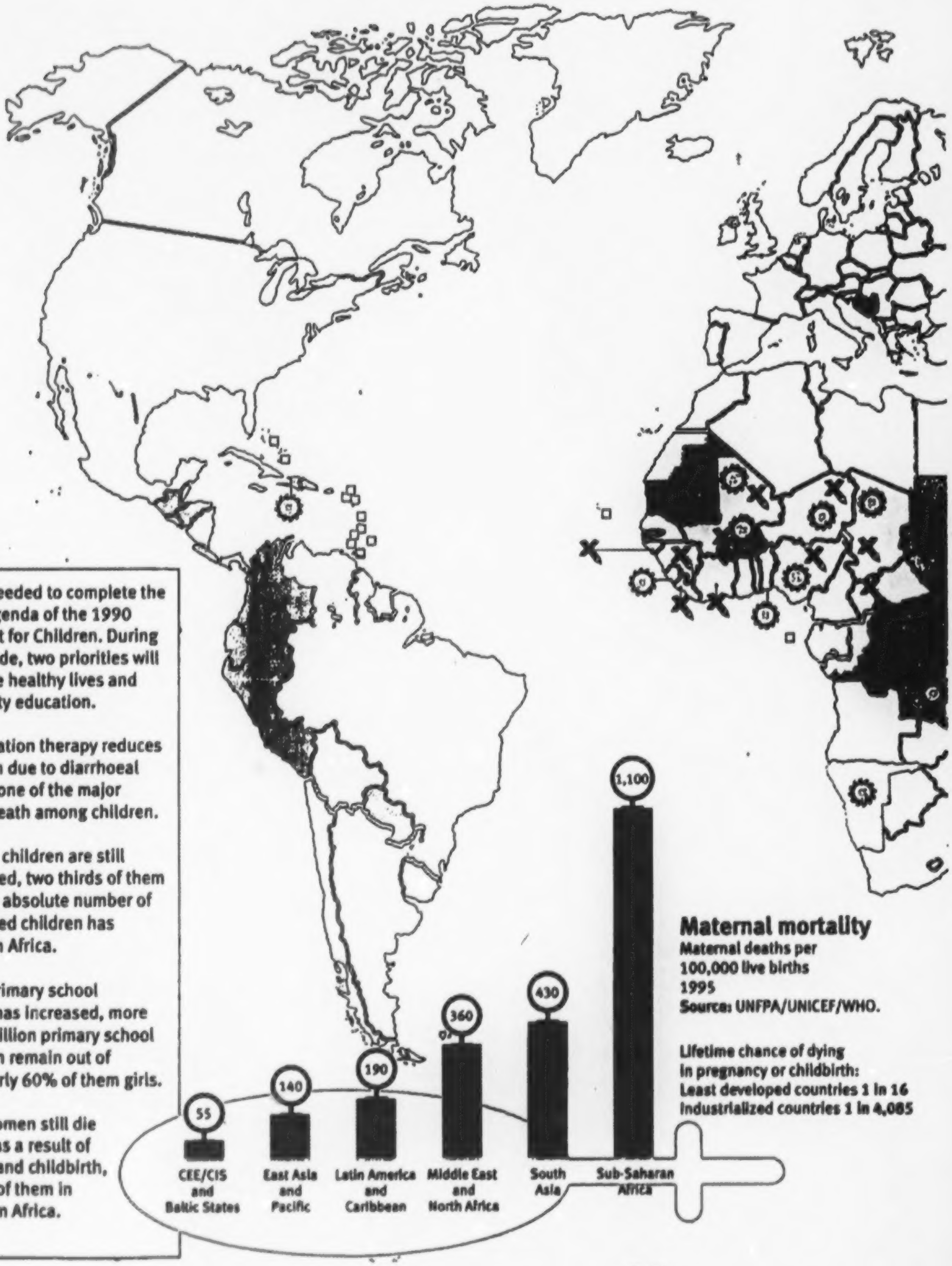
Actions are needed to complete the unfinished agenda of the 1990 World Summit for Children. During the next decade, two priorities will be to promote healthy lives and provide quality education.

- Oral rehydration therapy reduces dehydration due to diarrhoeal diseases – one of the major causes of death among children.
- 149 million children are still malnourished, two thirds of them in Asia. The absolute number of malnourished children has increased in Africa.
- Although primary school enrolment has increased, more than 100 million primary school age children remain out of school, nearly 60% of them girls.
- 515,000 women still die every year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth, nearly half of them in sub-Saharan Africa.


55
CEE/CIS and Baltic States
140
East Asia and Pacific
190
Latin America and Caribbean
360
Middle East and North Africa
430
South Asia
1,100
Sub-Saharan Africa

**Maternal mortality**
Maternal deaths per
100,000 live births
1995
Source: UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO.

Lifetime chance of dying
in pregnancy or childbirth:
Least developed countries 1 in 16
Industrialized countries 1 in 4,085

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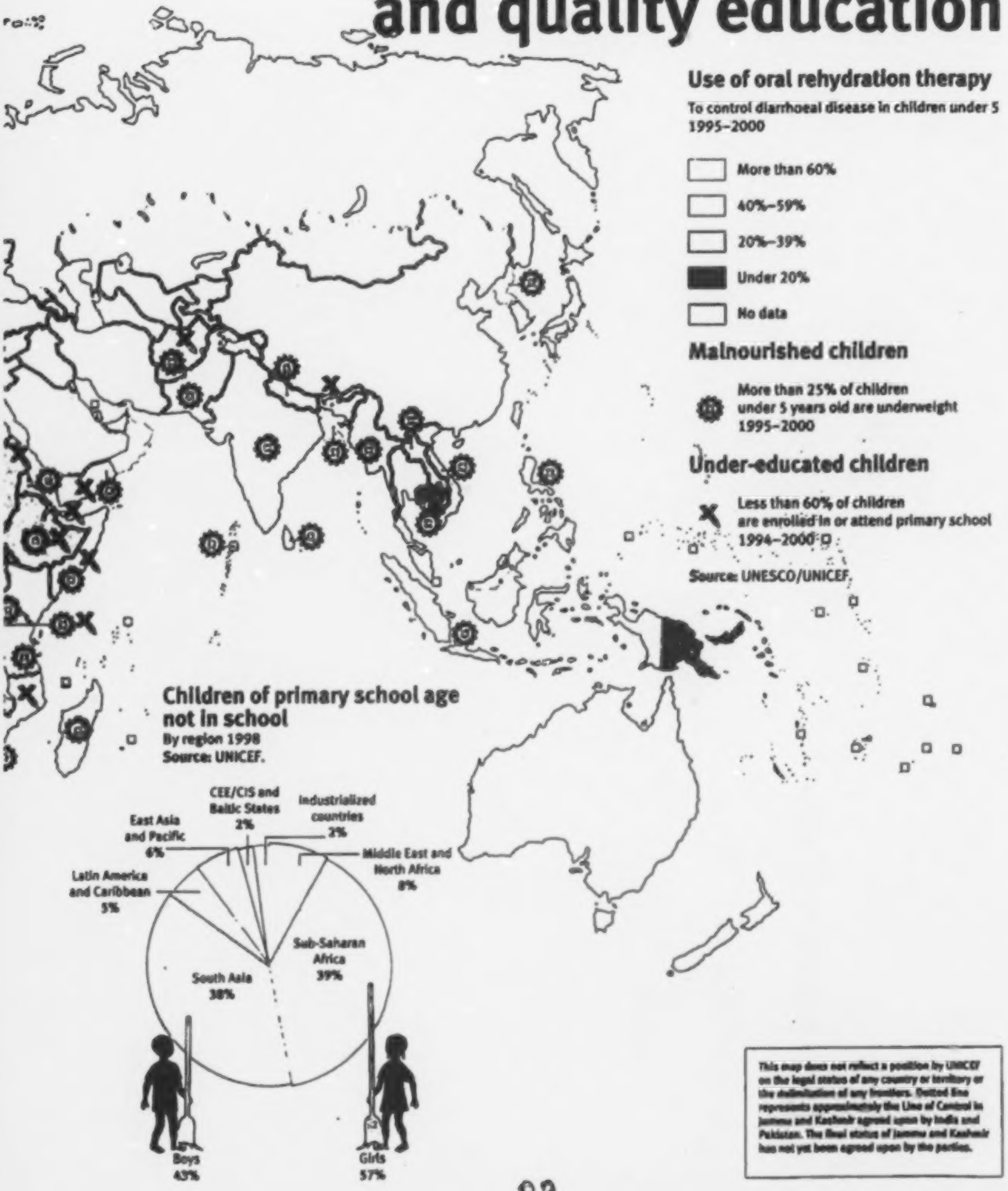
# Promoting healthy lives and quality education



## Use of oral rehydration therapy

To control diarrhoeal disease in children under 5
1995–2000

- ☐ More than 60%
- ☐ 40%–59%
- ☐ 20%–39%
- ■ Under 20%
- ☐ No data

## Malnourished children

More than 25% of children under 5 years old are underweight
1995–2000

## Under-educated children

✕ Less than 60% of children are enrolled in or attend primary school
1994–2000

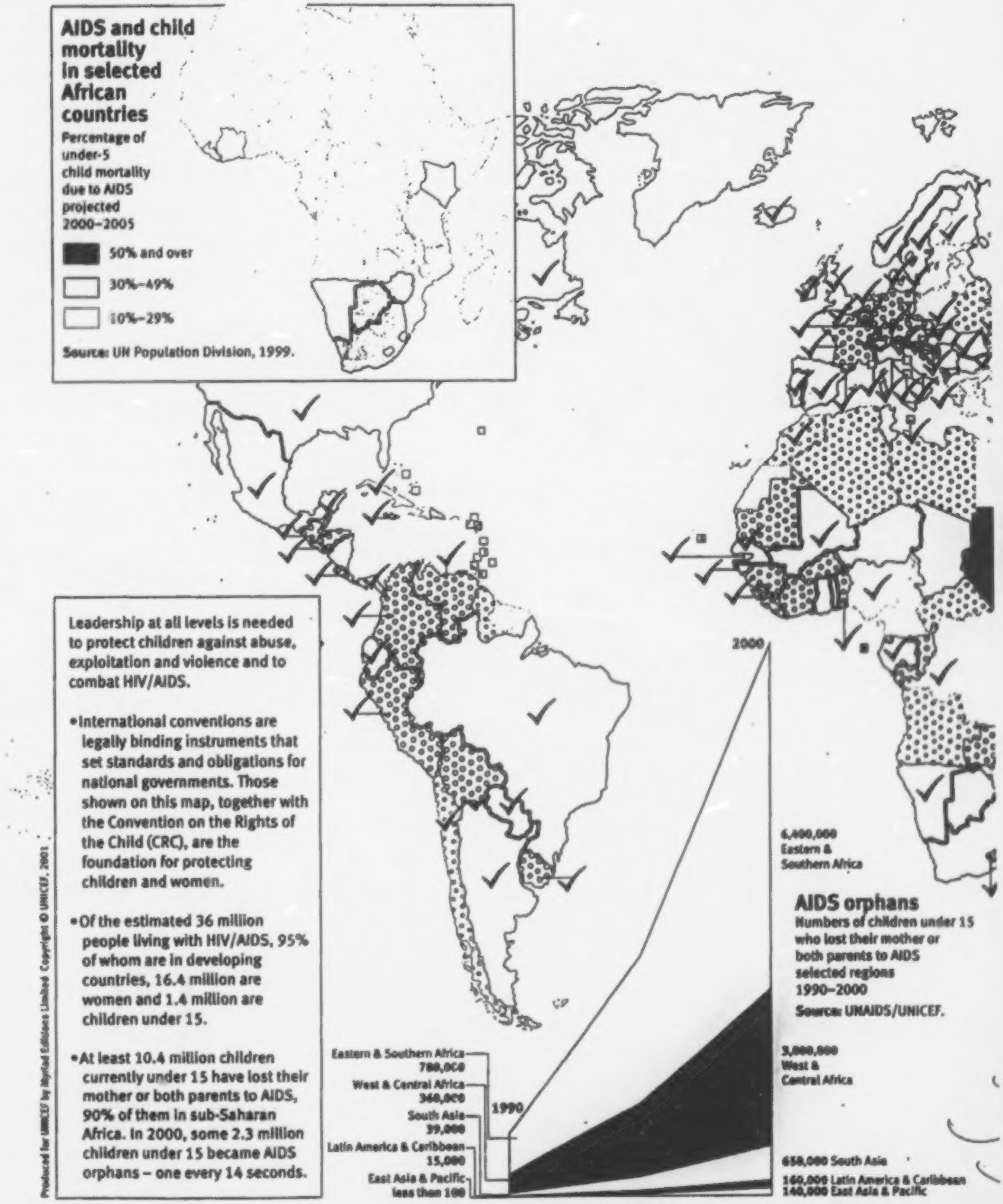
Source: UNESCO/UNICEF.

## Children of primary school age not in school

By region 1998
Source: UNICEF.

CEE/CIS and Baltic States 2%
Industrialized countries 2%
East Asia and Pacific 6%
Middle East and North Africa 8%
Latin America and Caribbean 5%
Sub-Saharan Africa 39%
South Asia 38%
Boys 43%
Girls 57%

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.



## AIDS and child mortality in selected African countries

Percentage of under-5 child mortality due to AIDS projected 2000–2005

■ 50% and over

□ 30%–49%

□ 10%–29%

**Source:** UN Population Division, 1999.

Leadership at all levels is needed to protect children against abuse, exploitation and violence and to combat HIV/AIDS.

- International conventions are legally binding instruments that set standards and obligations for national governments. Those shown on this map, together with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are the foundation for protecting children and women.
- Of the estimated 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS, 95% of whom are in developing countries, 16.4 million are women and 1.4 million are children under 15.
- At least 10.4 million children currently under 15 have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS, 90% of them in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2000, some 2.3 million children under 15 became AIDS orphans – one every 14 seconds.

## AIDS orphans

Numbers of children under 15 who lost their mother or both parents to AIDS selected regions 1990–2000

**Source:** UNAIDS/UNICEF.

2000
6,400,000 Eastern & Southern Africa
3,000,000 West & Central Africa
650,000 South Asia
160,000 Latin America & Caribbean
140,000 East Asia & Pacific
1990
Eastern & Southern Africa 780,000
West & Central Africa 360,000
South Asia 39,000
Latin America & Caribbean 15,000
East Asia & Pacific less than 100

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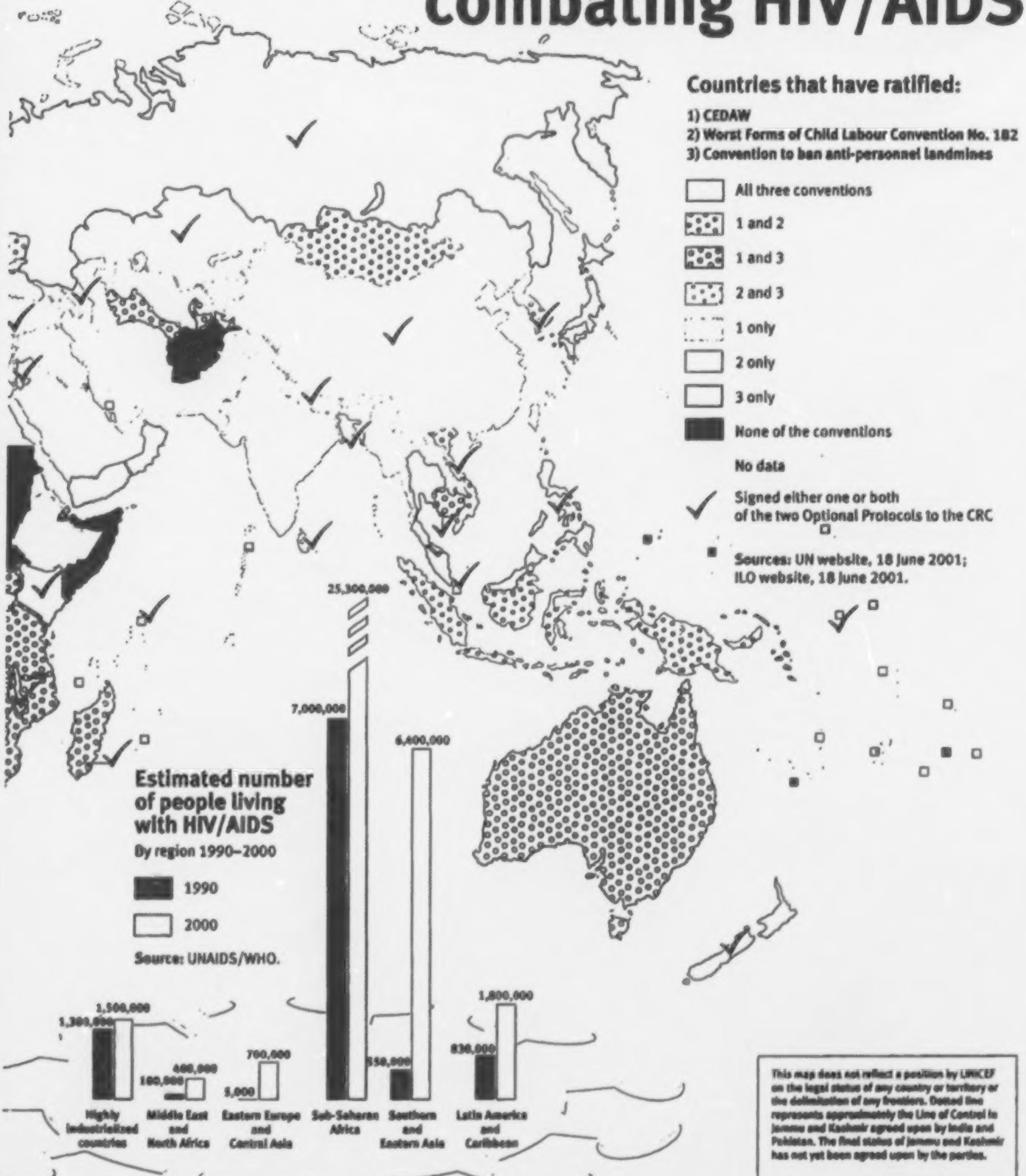
# Protecting children and combating HIV/AIDS


Countries that have ratified:
1) CEDAW
2) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182
3) Convention to ban anti-personnel landmines
All three conventions
1 and 2
1 and 3
2 and 3
1 only
2 only
3 only
None of the conventions
No data
Signed either one or both of the two Optional Protocols to the CRC
1990
2000
1,300,000
1,500,000
100,000
400,000
5,000
700,000
7,000,000
25,300,000
550,000
6,400,000
830,000
1,800,000
Highly industrialized countries
Middle East and North Africa
Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Sub-Saharan Africa
Southern and Eastern Asia
Latin America and Caribbean

Sources: UN website, 18 June 2001; ILO website, 18 June 2001.

**Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS**

By region 1990–2000

Source: UNAIDS/WHO.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

# General notes on maps

The maps are based on data from the United Nations Secretary-General's report 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children'. Updated statistical data from national end-decade reviews will be included in a statistical annex to the Secretary-General's report that will be available at the United Nations Special Session on Children in September 2001.

Data sources for illustrations are given on each map. As many countries as space allows have been included. Some island nations are surrounded by a box if an indicator may not otherwise be seen easily.

An interactive version of these maps is accessible on UNICEF's website at: ‹www.unicef.org/sowc02/›.

**Map 1. Progress since the World Summit for Children:** No special note.

**Map 2. Promoting healthy lives and quality education:** The maternal mortality ratio (annual maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) is a measure of the risk of death a woman faces each time she becomes pregnant. Lifetime risk of death measures the cumulative risk of death from motherhood across a woman's reproductive years, taking into account both the average number of births per woman and the probability of dying as a result of childbearing.

The oral rehydration therapy data for Belize, China, Costa Rica, Mexico, Namibia, Sri Lanka and Syria are from 1990–1995, and that for Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago are from 1987. The data of malnourished children in Namibia are from 1992.

**Map 3. Protecting children and combating HIV/AIDS:** The full titles of the Conventions shown on the map are as follows: CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182: Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; Convention to ban anti-personnel landmines: Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction; CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child; two Optional Protocols to the CRC: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Signature of a convention by a State constitutes a preliminary and general endorsement and creates an obligation of good faith to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and the purpose of the convention. Ratification of a convention means that the State Party agrees to be legally bound by the terms of the convention. The two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child were opened for signature in May 2000 and their ratification has started.

The data for AIDS orphans are broken down into UNICEF geographic regions. The data for people living with HIV/AIDS are analysed by UNAIDS/WHO regions. The two regional breakdowns are not comparable.

# Balance Sheets

*A summary of the goals, gains and unfinished business of the 1990-2000 decade as included in the Report of the Secretary-General, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children'.*

1. CHILD HEALTH .................... *PAGE 86*

2. NUTRITION .................... *PAGE 87*

3. WOMEN'S HEALTH .................... *PAGE 88*

4. WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION .................... *PAGE 89*

5. EDUCATION .................... *PAGE 90*

BALANCE SHEET

# Child health (1990-2000)

| GOAL | GAINS | UNFINISHED BUSINESS |
|---|---|---|
| **Infant and under-five mortality:** *reduction by one third in infant mortality and U5MR* | ☐ More than 60 countries achieved the goal of U5MR.<br>☐ At the global level, U5MR declined by 14 per cent. | ☐ U5MR rates increased in 14 countries (9 of them in sub-Saharan Africa) and were unchanged in 11 others.<br>☐ Serious disparities remain in U5MR within countries: by income level, urban vs. rural, and among minority groups. |
| **Polio:** *global eradication by 2000* | ☐ More than 175 countries are polio-free. | ☐ Polio is still endemic in 20 countries. |
| **Routine immunization:** *maintenance of a high level of immunization coverage* | ☐ Sustained routine immunization coverage at 75 per cent (three doses of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine (DPT3)). | ☐ Less than 50 per cent of children under one year of age in sub-Saharan Africa are immunized against DPT3. |
| **Measles:** *reduction by 95 per cent in measles deaths and 90 per cent in measles cases by 1995 as a major step to global eradication in the longer run* | ☐ Worldwide reported measles incidence has declined by nearly two thirds between 1990 and 1999. | ☐ In more than 15 countries, measles vaccination coverage is less than 50 per cent. |
| **Neonatal tetanus:** *elimination by 1995* | ☐ 104 of 161 developing countries have achieved the goal.<br>☐ Deaths caused by neonatal tetanus declined by 50 per cent between 1990 and 2000. | ☐ 27 countries (18 in Africa) account for 90 per cent of all remaining neonatal tetanus. |
| **Deaths due to diarrhoea:** *reduce them by 50 per cent* | ☐ This goal was achieved globally, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates. | ☐ Diarrhoea remains one of the major causes of death among children. |
| **Acute respiratory infections (ARI):** *reduction of ARI deaths by one third in children under five* | ☐ ARI case management has improved at health centre level.<br>☐ The effectiveness of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b and pneumococcus vaccines is established. | ☐ ARI remains one of the greatest causes of death among children.<br>☐ Vertical, single-focus ARI programmes seem to have had little global impact. |

**Source:** United Nations, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', Report of the Secretary-General, A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001.

## BALANCE SHEET

# Nutrition (1990-2000)

| GOAL | GAINS | UNFINISHED BUSINESS |
|---|---|---|
| **Malnutrition:** *reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-five children by half* | ☐ Malnutrition declined by 17 per cent in developing countries. South America achieved the goal with a 60 per cent reduction in underweight prevalence over the decade. | ☐ 149 million children are still malnourished, two thirds of them in Asia. The absolute number of malnourished children has increased in Africa. |
| **Breastfeeding:** *empowerment of all women to breastfeed their children exclusively for four to six months and to continue breastfeeding, with complementary food, well into the second year of life* | ☐ Exclusive breastfeeding rates increased by nearly one fifth over the decade.<br>☐ Gains were also made in timely complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding into the second year of life. | ☐ Only about half of all infants are exclusively breastfed for the first four months of life. |
| **Vitamin A deficiency:** *virtual elimination by the year 2000* | ☐ More than 40 countries are reaching the large majority of their children (over 70 per cent) with at least one high-dose vitamin A supplement a year. UNICEF estimates that as many as one million child deaths may have been prevented in this way in the last three years alone. | ☐ As many countries are discontinuing national polio immunization days, a new distribution system for vitamin A will have to be found. |
| **Iodine deficiency disorders:** *virtual elimination* | ☐ Some 72 per cent of households in the developing world are using iodized salt, compared to less than 20 per cent at the beginning of the decade. As a result, 90 million newborns are protected yearly from significant loss in learning ability. | ☐ There are still 37 countries where less than half the households consume iodized salt. |
| **Low birthweight:** *reduction of the rate of low birthweight (2.5 kilograms (kg) or less) to less than 10 per cent* | ☐ To date, 57 developing countries have low-birthweight levels below 10 per cent. | ☐ 11 million babies in South Asia and 3.6 million babies in sub-Saharan Africa are born each year with low birthweight. |
| **Growth monitoring:** *growth promotion and regular growth monitoring among children to be institutionalized in all countries by the end of the 1990s* | ☐ A majority of developing countries have implemented growth monitoring and promotion activities using various approaches. | ☐ Growth monitoring information is often not used as a basis for community, family or government action. |
| **Household food security:** *Dissemination of knowledge and supporting services to increase food production* | ☐ The number of people in developing countries lacking sufficient calories in their diets has decreased marginally. | ☐ In sub-Saharan Africa, about one third of the population lack sufficient food. |

**Source:** United Nations, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', Report of the Secretary-General, A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001.

BALANCE SHEET

# Women's health (1990-2000)

| GOAL | GAINS | UNFINISHED BUSINESS |
|---|---|---|
| **Maternal mortality:** *reduction between 1990 and the year 2000 of the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by half* | ☐ There has been heightened awareness of causes leading to high MMR, but little tangible progress. | ☐ There is no evidence that maternal death rates have declined significantly over the last decade.<br>☐ 515,000 women still die every year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth. A woman in sub-Saharan Africa faces a 1 in 13 chance of dying during pregnancy and childbirth. |
| **Family planning:** *access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too numerous* | ☐ Contraceptive prevalence increased by 10 per cent globally and doubled in the least developed countries.<br>☐ The total fertility rate has declined from 3.2 to 2.8. | ☐ Every year, adolescents give birth to 15 million infants.<br>☐ Only 23 per cent of women (married or in union) in sub-Saharan Africa use contraceptives.<br>☐ Access to reproductive health education remains a challenge. |
| **Childbirth care:** *access by all pregnant women to prenatal care, trained attendants during childbirth and referral facilities for high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies* | ☐ Modest gains were made in both antenatal care and births assisted by a skilled health worker in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa. | ☐ Essential obstetric care services are lacking.<br>☐ Coverage of delivery care is only 29 per cent in South Asia and 37 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. |
| **Anaemia:** *reduction of iron deficiency anaemia in women by one third of 1990 levels* | ☐ Most developing countries have iron supplementation measures for pregnant women. | ☐ Available evidence shows little change during the 1990s in the prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women. |

**Source:** United Nations, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', Report of the Secretary-General, A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001.

### BALANCE SHEET

# Water and environmental sanitation (1990-2000)

| GOAL | GAINS | UNFINISHED BUSINESS |
|---|---|---|
| **Water:** *universal access to safe drinking water* | ☐ 816 million additional people obtained access to improved water supplies over the decade. | ☐ Some 1.1 billion people still lack access. Global coverage increased by only 3 per cent, to 82 per cent.<br>☐ Water quality problems have grown more severe in a number of countries during the decade.<br>☐ Coverage in low-income areas remains low, especially in informal settlements. |
| **Sanitation:** *universal access to sanitary means of excreta disposal* | ☐ 747 million additional people utilized improved sanitation facilities. | ☐ 2.4 billion people, including half of all Asians, lack access. Global coverage increased by only 5 per cent, to 60 per cent.<br>☐ 80 per cent of those lacking sanitation live in rural areas. |
| **Guinea worm disease:** *elimination* | ☐ The number of reported cases has declined by 97 per cent. The disease is now eliminated in all regions except one country in the Middle East and 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. | ☐ Momentum towards elimination of guinea worm disease needs to be maintained. |

**Source:** United Nations, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', Report of the Secretary-General, A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001.

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BALANCE SHEET

# Education (1990-2000)

| GOAL | GAINS | UNFINISHED BUSINESS |
|---|---|---|
| **Early childhood development:** *expansion of early childhood development (ECD) activities, including appropriate low-cost family and community-based interventions* | ☐ Enrolment of children in early childhood programmes has kept pace with or exceeded population growth rates in most regions. | ☐ Most progress has been among urban and elite populations and on formal pre-school programmes.<br>☐ Countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia have seen a virtual collapse of public provision of pre-school education.<br>☐ Limited progress on comprehensive family- and community-based approaches. |
| **Universal access to basic education:** *achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children* | ☐ Net primary school enrolment has increased in all regions and reached 82 per cent globally.<br>☐ Latin America has achieved its regional target of more than 70 per cent primary school achievement in urban areas.<br>☐ The World Education Forum (Dakar 2000) endorsed a comprehensive definition of education quality.<br>☐ Many countries have extended the period of basic education to close the gap between end of compulsory schooling and minimum age for employment.<br>☐ Humanitarian relief now includes education as part of its basic package.<br>☐ The HIPC II initiative now links increased investment in basic education to debt relief. | ☐ Over 100 million children of primary school age remain out of school, especially working children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, conflict and disability, children of the poor or ethnic minorities and rural children.<br>☐ Millions are receiving an education of poor quality.<br>☐ At least one third of the 190 million working children aged 10-14 in developing countries have no access at all to basic education.<br>☐ Funding for education interventions in humanitarian crises remains a low priority.<br>☐ Implementation of HIPC II has been slow. |
| **Gender disparities:** *reduction of current disparities between boys and girls* | ☐ The primary school enrolment gap between girls and boys has narrowed globally from 8 percentage points to 6 percentage points.<br>☐ Among developing regions, CEE/CIS and Baltic States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and East Asia and the Pacific have the lowest gender gap (of 2 percentage points or less).<br>☐ Middle East and North African countries have halved the gender gap, to 8 percentage points.<br>☐ South Asia reduced the gender gap by nearly a fifth, to 14 percentage points. | ☐ The gender gap has not changed over the decade in sub-Saharan Africa. |
| **Adult literacy:** *reduction of adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 rate, with special emphasis on female literacy* | ☐ Adult illiteracy has declined from 25 per cent to 21 per cent. | ☐ Absolute number of illiterate adults has remained at about 880 million over the last decade worldwide, with numbers of illiterates increasing in most regions.<br>☐ Illiteracy is increasingly concentrated among women, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. |
| **Knowledge, skills and values for better living:** *increased acquisition by individuals and families of knowledge, skills and values for better living, using all educational channels* | ☐ Provision of education and training for young people in skills formation is increasing, with greater emphasis on life skills and livelihood skills.<br>☐ New partnerships have emerged among education providers, industry and community leaders to promote relevant skills-based learning. | ☐ Young people, especially in Central and Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, face massive unemployment and often displacement.<br>☐ The majority of young people in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia lack the skills to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. |

**Source:** United Nations, 'We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children', Report of the Secretary-General, A/S-27/3, United Nations, New York, 4 May 2001.

# Regional Consultations

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*Excerpts from the regional, high-level-meetings that were held in 2000-2001 in preparation for the Special Session on Children.*

1. THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ........................................ *PAGE 92*

2. BEIJING DECLARATION........................................................ *PAGE 93*

3. THE BERLIN COMMITMENT .................................................. *PAGE 94*

4. KATHMANDU UNDERSTANDING ............................................. *PAGE 95*

5. THE KINGSTON CONSENSUS .................................................. *PAGE 96*

6. PANAMA DECLARATION ........................................................ *PAGE 97*

7. THE RABAT DECLARATION ..................................................... *PAGE 98*

# The African Common Position

## *as adopted by The Pan-African Forum for Children*

**As a contribution to the United Nations Special Session on Children, representatives from governments, civil society, youth groups and other institutions came together at the Pan-African Forum held in Egypt, 28 to 31 May 2001, and adopted a common position. The basic principles of their plan of action are excerpted below.**

☐ *"The challenge now is to reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the goals of today are met. We recognize that the future of Africa lies with the well-being of its children and youth. The prospect for the socio-economic transformation of the continent rests with investing in the young people of the continent.* ***Today's investment in children is tomorrow's peace, stability, security, democracy and sustainable development.*** *We acknowledge that African children and youth represent more than half of the continent's population. But their views have not been sought concerning the pressing social, economic and human rights issues that directly affect them.* ***Africa's young voices must not be ignored; they must be heard.***

☐ *We affirm that responding to the needs of Africa's children is an imperative. Children should be at the core of priorities for policy makers.* ***Africa's children are indispensable actors for the present and future of our continent.***

☐ *We note that Africa's children in many ways are the most disadvantaged in the world. Their lives are often too short and their life-chances are too limited. They are exposed to violence and HIV/AIDS infection; they are deprived of education; they are vulnerable to malnutrition and disease. The special needs and demands of Africa's children and youth require focused attention now and in the coming years.* ***Africa's children need full support and commitment and they need it now.***

☐ *We note further that Africa's youth are facing a future affected by violence and poverty, and all-too-often foreshortened by HIV/AIDS, malaria and other pandemics. We also note that natural and man-made disasters as well as the negative impact of external debt servicing, globalization and trade liberalization have added to the plight of Africa's children. Youth has been overlooked in national and international action and policy-making, and the links between children and youth have been too long neglected. But the energy and commitment of youth represent a formidable force for positive change. They will determine which direction Africa takes in the coming decades.* ***The children and the youth are our greatest untapped resource.***

☐ *We reaffirm that children have a right to enjoy a healthy environment for the realization of their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Equally they have a duty to participate in activities that rehabilitate or protect the environment.*

☐ *We are deeply concerned that Africa continues to be plagued by war and armed conflicts which have an enormous and disproportionate negative impact on the civilian population, particularly children and women, a situation in which the human rights of children can never be fully realized.*

☐ *We reaffirm Africa's commitments to peaceful co-existence and the settlement of disputes through negotiations, dialogue and reconciliation as an essential condition for the creation of a child and youth friendly and conducive environment for the protection, survival, growth and development of children and youth.*

☐ *We admit that although some progress has been achieved, the record of the last eleven years is still unsatisfactory. Overall, Africa's children have lost another decade, and with the foreseen but unprevented tragedy of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Africa stands in danger of losing a generation. This record compels us to recognize our neglect of basic obligations, and challenges us to adopt alternative paradigms for tomorrow. We cannot afford to give up on another decade of African children and youth.* ***Africa's children need to enjoy their rights to health, education and training now. At the same time, they must assume their responsibilities.***

☐ *We submit that the special needs of Africa's children have to date not been adequately reflected in international policies and programmes. Africa's children and youth need and demand a special place in all policy-making structures and in the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. This Forum is intended to articulate those special needs: its recommendations must be specific and relevant to Africa.* ***The concerns of children and youth in Africa must be at the centre of the global agenda.***

☐ *We stress that responsibility for realizing the Rights of the Child falls at all levels, children, youth, on families, on communities, on civil society, on the private sector, on national governments, on subregional and regional organizations and on the international community.* ***The agenda of 'Africa Fit for Children' must ignite real commitment, sustained resolve and concrete action.***

☐ *More than ten years after the historic World Summit for Children, and the adoption of the World Declaration and Plan of Action that set specific goals for child rights and welfare to be met by 2000, we are in a position to evaluate progress. (See Annex.) Much has been achieved, but many promises and aspirations remain to be met. Some of the shortcomings have arisen from external factors, while others are our own responsibility.*

☐ *We reaffirm the principle of the universality of the rights of children within the framework of positive cultural diversity."*

# Beijing Declaration

## *on Commitments for Children in the East Asia and Pacific Region for 2001 – 2010*

**Meeting at the Fifth East Asia and Pacific Ministerial Consultation held on 14 to 16 May 2001 in Beijing, delegates from 21 countries in the region unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration. The Declaration included the following set of principles and strategies as the basis for their actions in meeting their responsibilities to protect the rights of children.**

- ☐ *"Support a global movement for children and a child friendly society through expanded community mobilization, including children and youth, in co-operation with government, civil society and the private sector;*
- ☐ *Monitor and evaluate achievements in terms of the fulfilment of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;*
- ☐ *Mainstream children's well-being at the centre of the national agenda, as the most important indicator of national economic and social progress, and allocate sufficient resources for investing in children;*
- ☐ *Promote and protect the best interests of all children by focusing on critical stages in the life of a child when interventions will have the greatest and most lasting effect. As such we will ensure that all children have:*
  - ☐ *The best start to life through optimal early childhood care and development, universal birth registration and the right to acquire a nationality;*
  - ☐ *A basic education of high quality;*
  - ☐ *The opportunity to develop fully their individual capacities and to participate in and contribute to their societies, especially during adolescence;*
- ☐ *Encourage the formulation and subsequent implementation of national plans of action for this decade with inputs from children, parents and communities, consistent with the goals and targets of the forthcoming Special Session on Children of the United Nations General Assembly;*
- ☐ *Strengthen the capacity of national and sub-national institutions to implement integrated national plans of action, within a decentralized system;*
- ☐ *Expand the strategic alliances and partnerships for children at all levels for the implementation of integrated, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary programmes for children;*
- ☐ *Prevent and minimize the negative impact of man-made and natural disasters through better preparation and strengthened social services including the provision of safety nets for those affected;*
- ☐ *Strengthen mechanisms for the empowerment of children and adolescents in the consideration of their concerns and in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of appropriate actions to address those concerns;*
- ☐ *Recognise and support parents and families as the primary caretakers of children and strengthen their capacity to provide the optimum care, nurturing and protection;*
- ☐ *Strengthen the capacities of social services providers and other care givers for the greater development, protection and care of children;*
- ☐ *Welcome the sharing of the responsibility to ensure the well-being of children with communities; local governments; social, cultural, religious, business, local people's and children's organizations; and civil society, including the media. Within this, support the empowerment of other organizations to play a greater role in contributing to the best interests of children;*
- ☐ *Give priority to developing sustainable solutions and systems for improving the situation for children by fully involving children and their communities;*
- ☐ *Recognise that although globalization has facilitated economic growth and development in many instances, it has also marginalized many poor countries. Consequentially, it is necessary to review trade policies and commitments which may have adverse effects on children and provide social safety nets and national protection mechanisms to protect children and their families from the negative effects of globalization;*
- ☐ *Harness the opportunities offered by the global information and communication revolution and use, in the most effective way possible, new technologies that can benefit children and women. At the same time protect children from their harmful effects;*
- ☐ *Ensure the best interest of the child in all programmes and at all levels and sectors by ensuring good governance and transparency;*
- ☐ *Build upon lessons learned and develop a better understanding of the success factors that improve the efficacy and efficiency of interventions and responses;*
- ☐ *Develop a strong disaggregated information base to help assess problems, develop solutions, target interventions and monitor and evaluate results. Recognise the value of measurable indicators and targets as benchmarks of success or failure and;*
- ☐ *Develop indicators and systems, with inputs from children and those concerned, for monitoring the situation and progress of poor and vulnerable groups, down to the lowest administrative level."*

### REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

# The Berlin Commitment

## *for Children of Europe and Central Asia*

Following a series of regional consultations, delegates from 52 European and Central Asian countries and the Holy See, met in Berlin, 16 to 18 May 2001 in a high-level meeting organized by the Governments of Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation for the United Nations Special Session on Children. Their discussions resulted in 20 specific commitments for improving the lives of children and young people, the basis of which is excerpted below.

☐ *"**Recognising** that progress has been achieved during the past decade in fulfilling the rights of the child throughout Europe and Central Asia, in particular with regard to commitments taken at the 1990 World Summit for Children and the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, universally ratified by countries of Europe and Central Asia,*

☐ ***Welcoming** the important contribution of civil society, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and regional and international organisations, especially the UN System, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States, to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,*

☐ ***Also welcoming** that children throughout Europe and Central Asia are increasingly acknowledged as subjects of human rights and that government strategies and legal frameworks, administrative policies and practices progressively respect the right of the child to participate in social life and to partake in the decision-making processes which affect their lives,*

☐ ***Bearing in mind** our responsibility towards future generations, which implies, inter alia, that any action undertaken today, must not endanger the enjoyment by our children of their human rights,*

☐ ***Recognising** that poverty and economic and social disparities, including growing income inequalities especially in the countries in transition, lack of opportunities for leisure and recreation and changes in family structures limit the chances of children of fully developing their personalities, mental and physical abilities, and of growing into a fulfilled adulthood,*

☐ ***Concerned** that a growing number of children, particularly in the countries in transition, are being deprived of their right to grow up in a healthy, safe and supportive family and community environment which results in growing numbers of children at risk of social exclusion, in significant increases in morbidity, stunting of growth and child development delay as a consequence of poor quality of care as well as in reduced numbers of children participating in basic education programmes and increased rates of juvenile delinquency, accidents and suicides,*

☐ ***Recognising** that much still needs to be done to improve the health and social environment for children as well as the quality and relevance of educational programmes, and that low and/or declining public expenditure in the countries in transition caused by overall financial constraints and other factors, continues to affect the provision of social services for children and their access to quality education and health care,*

☐ ***Stressing** the need to ensure support, including through the restructuring of national budgets, international aid flows, and appropriate foreign investments, for the implementation of social reforms and programmes aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of the child in the countries of Europe and Central Asia, particularly in the countries in transition,*

☐ ***Concerned** at the rise in tuberculosis, malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, anaemia and iodine deficiency disorders in the countries in transition and noting with concern that HIV/AIDS continues to spread in many countries of Europe and Central Asia, greatly affecting those under 18 years of age and increasingly girls,*

☐ ***Aware** of the negative impact of an increasing level of substance abuse, including alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, on children's and young people's physical and mental health,*

☐ ***Also aware** of the increasing numbers of children of Europe and Central Asia at risk of all forms of abuse and violence, such as corporal punishment, sexual and economic exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, trafficking and homelessness,*

☐ ***Concerned** that armed conflicts and natural disasters continue to affect and destroy the lives of children in Europe and Central Asia and in this regard **stressing** the need for a growing awareness of protecting children's rights in conflict situations as well as the importance of protecting children from environmental threats such as chemical contamination and nuclear pollution and of ensuring that children grow up and live in an environment that is conducive to the highest attainable level of health,*

☐ ***Aware of the fact** that children belonging to minorities, internally displaced, refugee and migrant children, stateless children, children with disabilities and children infected with HIV and suffering from AIDS are at special risk of being victims of discrimination, and are in need of, and have the right to, special protection, inclusion and participation,*

☐ ***Taking note** of the results of regional and sub-regional preparatory conferences and consultations, including the proposals submitted by young people and civil society organisations working for children's rights, and welcoming the Political Message from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for communication to the Special Session,*

☐ ***Aiming** to contribute in collaboration with the UN System, civil society and children themselves to the preparations for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children and to further the development and implementation of actions for children in the next decade."*

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

# Kathmandu Understanding

## Investing in Children in South Asia

In May 2001, delegations from seven South Asian countries, including ministers of finance and planning, corporate leaders and young activists known as the 'Change Makers', met together in the South Asia High Level Meeting on Investing in Children. They issued the Kathmandu Understanding as an outcome of the meeting, part of which is excerpted below.

*"WE agree that children are the future of our nations and, therefore, investing in children should be a national priority....*

*WE affirm, therefore, that investing in children is a priority issue and that poverty reduction should begin with children.*

*WE affirm, once again, that there is no greater investment than laying a stable foundation for every child by ensuring the fulfilment of rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is our obligation to allocate the required financial resources and take all requisite actions towards the survival and development of all children in South Asia. This covers good health and nutrition of the populations, especially infants, adolescents and women, quality education for girls and boys, improved drinking water and environmental sanitation, and protection of children from all forms of discrimination, exploitation, violence and abuse, trafficking, and hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour. We recognise the urgent need to protect adolescents and young people from HIV/AIDS and children affected by armed conflict.*

*WE recognise that universal access to quality education is the critical foundation for economic growth. However, the quality of education and learning available to the majority of our children is a matter of great concern. We strongly affirm that South Asia cannot afford disparities in education between boys and girls. Efforts, therefore, must be intensified to achieve gender parity in access and learning.*

*WE recognise that governments, the corporate sector, civil society, communities, young people, international organisations and media need to work in partnership to ensure adequate, timely and productive investments in fulfilling the rights and achieving the well-being of all children in South Asia, and in strategies towards poverty alleviation.*

*WE call upon the international community to create a supportive environment for the survival, development and protection of children and promote a non-violent, non-exploitative international order. We urge the donor countries to meet all their commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, implement measures for debt relief, assess and monitor the impact of sanctions on children and ensure humanitarian exemptions that are child focused to address the possible adverse effects of the sanctions. We also urge donor countries to earmark a higher percentage of their Official Development Assistance for the welfare of children under the 20/20 Initiative. We urge UNICEF and our development partners to reaffirm, in spirit and in actions, the need for structural adjustment with a human face, and trade and tariff arrangements for preferential access to developed country markets.*

*Noting the situation of children in South Asia we:*

- ☐ *Reaffirm our commitments to accelerate progress to achieve the goals for children agreed at the World Summit for Children in 1990 and the 1996 SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children;*
- ☐ *Support and call for increasingly greater investment in children;*
- ☐ *Urge our development partners to enhance their aid and assistance to support higher investment in children in South Asia;*
- ☐ *Recognise the need to listen to children and actively explore ways of involving them in decisions that affect them at all levels;*
- ☐ *Recognise the importance of partnerships between government, private and corporate sector, civil society organisations, communities, individuals, children, international organisations and media;*
- ☐ *Call for the sharing of national experiences and best practices, and common strategies, which reach families and communities at the grassroots level for fulfilling the rights of children;*
- ☐ *Recognise the importance of regular monitoring and review of progress as part of the accountability for results;*
- ☐ *Propose that this Kathmandu Understanding be brought to the attention of UN General Assembly Special Session and the Third Special Session of the Standing Committee of SAARC which will meet in Colombo 8-9 June 2001, which provides another opportunity for a common position to be taken by our countries to the UN Special Session.*

*WE pledge to work towards the implementation of this Understanding."*

# The Kingston Consensus

## *Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas*

**Ministers and government representatives met in Kingston, Jamaica, on 9-13 October 2000 for the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas. The Kingston meeting was the first of the regional consultations held in preparation for the Special Session on Children. The following is excerpted from the Consensus statement.**

*"(We) are determined to:*

*☐ Make every necessary effort so that children and adolescents have opportunities to fully develop their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social capacities and to guarantee and promote respect for human rights.*

*☐ Develop and implement integrated policies and actions aimed at breaking the inter-generational cycles of poverty, and eradicating exclusion, discrimination and lack of respect for human rights.*

*☐ Promote actions and mechanisms to maximize the participation of children and adolescents in decision-making in all matters that directly and indirectly affect them.*

*☐ Support the creation of mechanisms that facilitate the participation of civil society in all matters that affect children and adolescents.*

*☐ Promote actions to eliminate discrimination and exclusion of ethnic groups, religious groups, linguistic or other minorities or indigenous peoples, and to strengthen their diverse cultural identities.*

*☐ Ensure the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of abuse, including injury, violence, neglect, sexual abuse, commercial exploitation, sale and traffic, forced labour, and from forced or compulsory recruitment for armed conflicts....*

*☐ Ensure the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of discrimination and harm, and support policies, plans and programmes to advance equality and respect for them.*

*☐ Ensure that every child and adolescent in conflict with the law has due process and is treated in accordance with the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and national legal instruments and standards for child protection. Further, to take such steps as are needed to provide training in human rights and in the administration of justice for children and adolescents, to all those involved with children and adolescents in conflict with the law.*

*☐ Ensure the rights of children and adolescents with different abilities, including those with disabilities, to appropriate services, attention, and education adequate to their capacities. Similarly, to create mechanisms to support their families and/or caregivers and their full integration into the society.*

*☐ Encourage the partnership between governments and civil society to assist children and adolescents to develop values that promote human rights and equality, peace, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equitable gender relations.*

*☐ Continue progress towards universal access to comprehensive health services, including effective prevention, early intervention, treatment and rehabilitation strategies. Also, increase knowledge of adolescents and children about sexual and reproductive health, with special emphasis on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.*

*☐ Progress toward universal high quality early childhood and primary education in an environment that promotes the full development of children and adolescents, instills respect for human rights, and prepares them for responsible life in society.*

*☐ Increase resources, based on availability, for comprehensive early childhood care and development to ensure better learning outcomes, reduce inequalities, and ensure fulfillment of human rights. Cooperate with civil society and families to support proper health, nutrition, and education.*

*☐ Develop and implement programmes geared to creating opportunities for children, adolescents, and adults who have not benefited from formal education or have dropped out of school. Special attention should be given to disadvantaged children and adolescents, such as those with disabilities, those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, adolescent mothers, and those in conflict with the law.*

*☐ Urge all countries to consider signing, ratifying and implementing all international legal instruments relating to the rights of children, in particular, ... These legal instruments represent major advances in the international effort to strengthen and enforce legal norms and national plans of action for the protection of the most vulnerable children.*

*☐ Call on donor and creditor countries and international financial institutions to consider accelerating the adoption of concrete ways to relieve the public debt burden....*

*☐ Reaffirm the implementation of the 20/20 initiative....*

*☐ Increase horizontal technical cooperation between countries in order to share positive experiences and strategies which can help to accelerate the processes necessary for achieving the agreed goals....*

*☐ Recognize that equitable sustainable human development could be facilitated if the rights and well-being of children are promoted and protected. The individual development of children is intrinsically connected to the development of the human society, thus shaping the future of the world.*

*☐ Respond to the unexpected challenges which will arise, that this Consensus does not address. In all such cases, decisions will be based on the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child, maximum survival and development, and participation of children and adolescents."*

# Panama Declaration

## *United for Children and Adolescents, on the Basis of Justice and Equity in the New Millennium*

**Heads of State and Government of the 21 Ibero-American countries met in Panama City at the Tenth Ibero-American Summit from 17 to 18 November 2000 and issued a call for renewed efforts to protect the rights of children. Their extended Declaration was based on the following preamble.**

*"We, the Heads of State and Government of the 21 Ibero-American countries meeting in Panama City on the occasion of the Tenth Ibero-American Summit, on 17 and 18 November 2000, and convinced that in order to achieve sustainable human development, democratic consolidation, equity, and social justice, based on the principles of the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights, it is essential that special attention be devoted to children and adolescents, have once again decided to consider together the situation of the children and adolescents of Ibero-America, with a view to formulating policies and promoting programmes and actions designed to ensure the respect of their rights, well-being and overall development.*

*We welcome the progress made since our first Summit, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, and note with satisfaction the deep affinities that unite and consolidate the Ibero-American community of nations, as a privileged forum for political dialogue and solidarity, which plays an increasingly active and influential role on the international stage.*

*We reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and defence of democracy and the state of law; political pluralism and cultural identity; and human rights in their civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects, including the right to development, respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-intervention, the non-use of force, and of the threat to use force, in international relations, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the right of all peoples to construct their political systems freely, under conditions of peace, stability and justice. These principles are part of our legacy to Ibero-American children and adolescents.*

*Convinced that the expansion of international trade is vitally important to the prosperity of our countries, we reiterate our individual and collective commitment to develop a multilateral trade system that is free, open, non-discriminatory, secure and transparent; regional integration; open regionalism, and the deepening of economic relations between the different regions of the world, under conditions of equity.*

*In consequence, we vigorously reject any extraterritorial application of national laws or unilateral measures implemented in contravention of international law, the United Nations Charter, or the prevailing laws of international trade. We therefore reiterate the urgent need to abolish such measures and once more urge the United States of America to end its implementation of the Helms-Burton Act, in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.*

*We also wish to stress that the total population of all our countries will soon reach six hundred million people, and that children and adolescents make up the majority of our people and are a source of creativity, energy, dynamism, initiative and social renewal.*

*We are delighted that most of our countries have succeeded in reducing mortality rates among infants and children under 5, and in eradicating certain immunopreventible diseases, as well as in increasing enrolment and graduation rates in primary education and in reducing illiteracy. However, the persistence of high rates of poverty and extreme poverty, of situations of social exclusion and socio-economic inequality, and of inadequate sanitation and health services, and the shortcomings and backwardness revealed by a number of indicators, call for a renewed collective effort to consolidate positive trends and guarantee effective observance of the rights of children and adolescents.*

*We also wish to stress that the infant and adolescent population constitutes an age group that is, by its very nature, particularly affected by negative socio-economic factors, which must be dealt with decisively, in order to eliminate or significantly reduce the damaging effects of the weakening of the social and family fabric caused by circumstances such as family abandonment, irresponsible fatherhood, and conflicts with the law.*

*We recognize the fundamental importance of children and adolescents as holders of rights in our societies, and the guiding regulatory role of the State in the design and execution of social policies that are intended for the benefit of children and adolescents and serve to guarantee their rights, and we reiterate our determination to build the foundations for the full development of their potential and social integration, in the light of the opportunities and challenges offered by today's global marketplace.*

*We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the principles and goals enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in other conventions, declarations and international instruments, both universal and regional, through which our Governments undertake to guarantee respect for the rights of children and adolescents, their access to a higher standard of well-being, and their effective participation in comprehensive development programmes."*

# The Rabat Declaration

## *Arab Regional Civil Society Forum on Children*

**The Arab Regional Civil Society Forum on Children brought together in Rabat, Morocco, 15-19 February 2001, some 250 participants from 21 countries, representing NGOs, parliamentarians, media, and young people. The meeting was convened by four parties: the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the Arab Institute for Human Rights, the Moroccan Observatory for the Rights of the Child and UNICEF. It discussed 27 papers covering the themes of the situation of children in the region, building a culture of child rights, early childhood, education, access to IT, adolescence, conflict, poverty, child labour, and the roles of civil society members in the Global Movement for Children. The Forum issued the Rabat Declaration.**

☐ *"Whereas World leaders assembled at the United Nations Headquarters more than a decade ago, in 1990, and adopted the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration in the 1990s;*

☐ *Whereas the Arab States, were among those in the international community who committed themselves to the Declaration and pledged to implement its provisions and activate its principles in order to ensure better conditions for children's present and future;*

☐ *Whereas the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children in the areas of health and education and to fulfil nourishing conditions within the child's family in an environment of well-being and stability, far from all fanaticism or hate, and in an atmosphere that protects children against the tragedies of violence, murder or wars;*

☐ *Whereas Governments in the Arab region are committed to taking the initiatives and steps required for facilitating the implementation of the spirit of the Convention and for adopting effective approaches to change the state of childhood and to provide all the opportunities for children to live in a world fit for children and free from discrimination;*

☐ *Recognising the important role of Civil Society Organisations in designing, managing and following-up of the implementation of the Convention, or in terms of drawing the attention of, proposing to, or pressuring political leaderships, Governments, the private sector and parliaments to adopt strategies for advancing the situation of children, developing suitable approaches and passing laws for that purpose, in addition to coordinating and entering into partnerships at both the regional and international levels;*

☐ *Based on the belief that the future of children depends on the realisation of their aspirations to live in a world fit for children, one that embraces their views and abilities and their strong and rich wills as citizens with rights and opinions, thus predicating their participation in political, economic and social decisions;*

☐ *Whereas the survival and development of children is a moral humanitarian pursuit and a responsibility that falls on all parties of society, hence necessitating the enhancement of partnerships, the establishment of inter-country relations among non-governmental organisations, and the optimum utilisation of all available human and financial resources for the promotion of economic policies vis-à-vis children's programs in various fields, with the aim of bridging disparities and alleviating poverty in order to achieve a new world order that serves childhood, instead one that aggravates the misfortunes of children and accelerates their demise;*

☐ *The Arab and Regional non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives, meeting in Rabat between 15 and 19 February 2001, at the invitation of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the Arab Institute for Human Rights, Morocco's National Observatory for Child Rights and UNICEF, emphasise the following:*

☐ *That they shall work in coordination and partnership with each other to employ all their efforts, experiences and capabilities for the best interest of childhood throughout the world in general, and in the Arab World in particular, in order to activate the values inherent in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a minimum upon which their combined will coincides with the will of the international community;*

☐ *That they shall call upon regional and international organisations, as well as States, Governments and leaders world-wide, to be closely bound by the Convention and to draw economic and developmental policies for the benefit of children and their lives, their safety and their dignity in a world of complete equality, free from wars, sanctions and diseases;*

☐ *That they shall make child participation and contribution one of their objectives, based on the firmly-established conviction that building the future of children can only be achieved through and with children themselves;*

☐ *That they shall leave no stone unturned in urging Arab Governments to rise to their duty of safeguarding and guaranteeing the rights of children, adolescents and youth and of providing all the facilities and mechanisms necessary for building children's capacities and responding to their needs. In this context, the Arab Governments shall be urged to ensure that national legislation conform with the spirit and contents of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; to endorse all human rights protocol and to lift their reservations vis-à-vis these conventions; to enhance the realm of basic freedoms and to respect opposing views in a democratic manner in a State built on a foundation of rights and the law;*

☐ *That they shall renew their commitment to working towards lifting sanctions and boycotts, advocating the cessation of wars, armed conflicts and occupation and alleviating their devastating effects on victimised children in Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, the Occupied Golan Heights and elsewhere."*

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# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **AIDS** | acquired immune deficiency syndrome |
| **ANDI** | Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância (News Agency on Children's Rights) |
| **ARI** | acute respiratory infection |
| **AZT** | the acronym used for the antiretroviral drug zidovudine |
| **BRAC** | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee |
| **CEE** | Central and Eastern Europe |
| **CIS** | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| **DPT3** | three doses of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine |
| **ECD** | early childhood development |
| **EDC** | especially difficult circumstances |
| **FGC** | female genital cutting |
| **FGM** | female genital mutilation |
| **FOKUPERS** | East Timorese Women's Communication Forum |
| **G7** | Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and the United States |
| **G8** | G7 plus the Russian Federation |
| **GAVI** | Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization |
| **GNP** | gross national product |
| **Hib** | *Haemophilus influenzae* type b |
| **HIPC** | Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative |
| **HIPC-qualified** | a poor country that carries an unsustainable debt burden, as defined by the World Bank and the IMF, that does not qualify for commercial loans and that can not bring its debt to a sustainable level even after the application of established debt relief mechanisms. |
| **HIV** | human immunodeficiency virus |
| **IMF** | International Monetary Fund |
| **NAC** | Norwegian Afghanistan Committee |
| **NGO** | non-governmental organization |
| **MMR** | maternal mortality ratio |
| **MobINil** | Egyptian Company for Mobile Services |
| **MTCT** | mother-to-child transmission (of HIV) |
| **ODA** | official development assistance |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **PYALARA** | Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation |
| **SOLWODI** | Solidarity with Women in Distress |
| **STI** | sexually transmitted infection |
| **Tostan** | A non-governmental organization based in Senegal. The name Tostan means 'breakthrough' in Wolof. |
| **U5MR** | under-five mortality rate |
| **VAD** | vitamin A deficiency |
| **WHO** | World Health Organization |

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## From "The State of the World's Children 2002"

"Can there be a more sacred duty than our obligation to protect the rights of a child as vigilantly as we protect the rights of every other person? Can there be a greater test of leadership than the task of ensuring those freedoms for every child, in every country, without exception?"

– Kofi A. Annan

*Secretary-General, United Nations*

"Ensuring the rights and well-being of children is the key to sustained development in a country and to peace and security in the world. Meeting this responsibility fully, consistently and at any cost, is the essence of leadership. Heads of State and Government hold the lion's share of this responsibility, but commitment and action are also called for across the board: from community activists and entrepreneurs, from artists and scientists, from religious leaders and journalists – and from children and adolescents themselves."

– Carol Bellamy

*Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund*

"The future of our children lies in leaders' hands and the choices leaders make."

– Graça Mathel and Nelson Mandela

*The Global Movement for Children*

"We must move children to the centre of the world's agenda. We must rigorously strategize to reduce poverty so that investments in children are given priority."

– Nelson Mandela

*Former President of South Africa*

## From children around the world

"We want a world where there is no discrimination [illegible] between boys and girls, [illegible] disabled, between [illegible] quality [illegible] for peace [illegible]"

– The Change Makers

[illegible]

"[illegible] one day in a country with [illegible] opportunities for social and economic [illegible]"

*El Salvador*

"But when the government [illegible] to us, they do [illegible] speak enough. [illegible]"

*Ethiopia*

"Maybe they (families) want to understand me, but they [illegible] say that I [illegible] So I tend to tell my problems to my friends, but they don't have the experience to guide me."

*Islamic Republic of Iran*

"I like to live, and with all the problems in my life I look forward to another new year."

*– Sri Lanka*

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